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*R. BIGGERS,*



THE  
CHRISTIAN  
IN COMPLETE ARMOUR,  
OR, A TREATISE ON  
THE SAINTS WAR WITH THE DEVIL;

WHEREIN  
A DISCOVERY IS MADE  
OF THE POLICY, POWER, WICKEDNESS, AND STRATAGEMS  
MADE USE OF BY THAT  
ENEMY OF GOD AND HIS PEOPLE.

A MAGAZINE OPENED,  
FROM WHENCE  
THE CHRISTIAN IS FURNISHED  
*With Spiritual Arms for the Battle, assisted in buckling on his  
Armour, and taught the Use of his Weapons;*  
TOGETHER WITH  
THE HAPPY ISSUE OF THE WHOLE WAR.

---

By WILLIAM GURNALL, A. M.  
FORMERLY PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, LAVENHAM,  
SUFFOLK.

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

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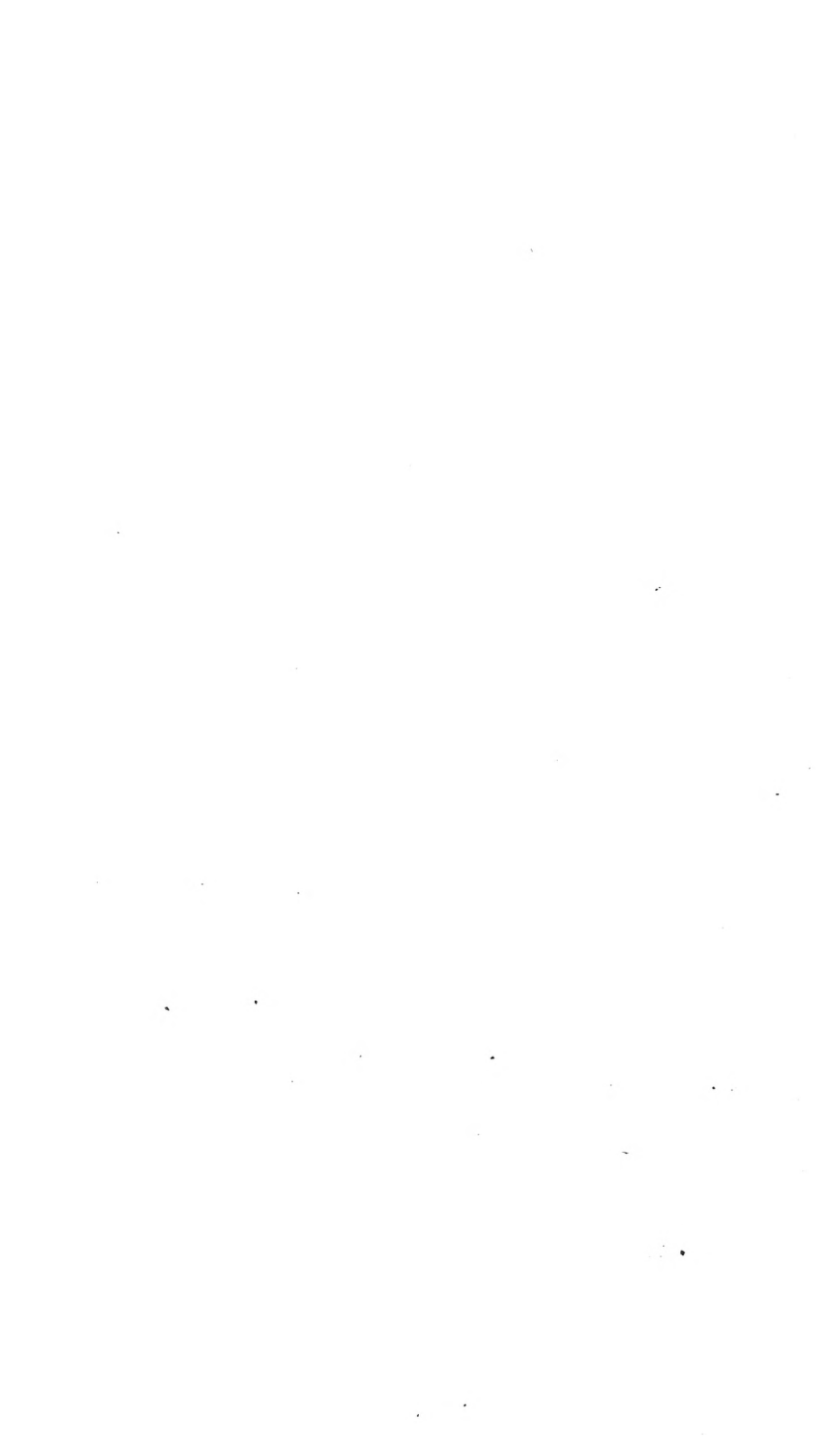
EIGHTH EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED, WITH A RECOMMEN-  
DATORY PREFACE,

*By the Rev. W. F. PLATT,*  
HOLYWELL MOUNT CHAPEL, SHOREDITCH.

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1803.



P R E F A T O R Y  
R E C O M M E N D A T I O N .

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READER,

*I* Freely confess that my abilities are in no respect adequate to point out the excellencies of the following Work, as it not only contains an explanation of the whole armour of God, but of every thing that relates both to doctrine and practice. The grand truths of the Gospel are largely illustrated, and their regular connection beautifully laid open, in the experience of the Christian, as no bible truth will ever be productive of any saving good, unless it is known experimentally; in the Christian armour all are brought forth to view, in the description that is given of the enemies the Child of God meets with and of the way by which in his journey to Zion the conflicts he hath with them he comes off more than a Conqueror.

Here Satan is exposed in his vast dominion and power, wisdom and subtilty, enmity and opposition, and the various ways in which he resists, and too often overcomes the saint, and keeps his own in bondage.

The world both in its persecuting and alluring spirit, is also largely treated on, and more particularly the latter, as the most dangerous and hurtful to believers — But as the body of sin and death has ever been the greatest burden to the Christian soldier, as well as the worst of his enemies; the Author evidently had a very deep acquaintance with it, in its secret workings and windings, and therefore, enters minutely into the influence the great enemy to God and man hath over it, in order to accomplish his ends;

*namely, to rob the soul of its peace and comfort, which is in a great measure maintained, by making a stand against its attacks.—Such are the nature, number, power, and policy of the Christian's foes, he would sink in the prospect of them, but much more so in the combat, were it not for the rich provision God hath made, and the evidence he hath, that the battle is not his, but the Lord's.—Hence a discovery and explanation of every part of that provision, must be very acceptable to the awakened sensible sinner.—To such I am happy to recommend Gurnall, as one who appears to have been divinely assisted for that purpose; for whatever may be the situation of the humble follower of the Lamb, however varied and numerous his enemies, he will find a suitable piece of armour, in the use of which, victory is sure to be declared in his favor.—Though it ought to be remembered, that as there is nothing to secure the back, to flee from the enemy is always attended with danger, and has proved awfully fatal to many, see Matth. xiii. 20, 22.*

*Reader, whoever thou art, of whatever name, is of no consequence, for names and parties must be entirely lost in the experimental teachings of the divine Spirit; which is sufficient to satisfy me, that the animosities that have been promoted, in contending about them, are not only a proof of the infirmities of human nature, and the darkness of the mind; but that they have been the weapons by which Satan has foiled many, and used to great advantage against the Church, in order to take off their attention from those matters, that relate more immediately to the life of God in the soul; with which, if you are acquainted, you will have much pleasure, and I have no doubt much profit in viewing the Christian in complete armour. You will, as in a glass, see your own features, let your present feelings be what they may.—If upon the Mount you will discover that you*



are not out of the reach of your enemy, and have need of caution — If in the valley, under the hidings of God's countenance, the influence of corruption, harrassed by temptation, oppressed by affliction, bodily, domestic, or from your situation in life; you will find that you are not alone, and that an ample provision is made for you by a covenant God.—May you be enabled to live up to your privileges, and make use of them according to your need.

But should you be in a lukewarm Laodicean state, you will not meet with one word that will encourage you in that condition; on the other hand, God's disapprobation of such a character, and the consequences of continuing in that awful situation, are faithfully represented. Should your reading alarm you, listen not to the suggestion that would persuade you to give over, but proceed; for though it may cause confusion of face, yet if it constrain you to return to your slighted friend, for pardon and peace, you will have occasion to be thankful; and in your experience, one principle end of re-publishing this blessed book, will be answered.

But as it is probable, some may be induced to look over the following pages, either to spend time, oblige a friend, or satisfy curiosity, who are indifferent about their contents as to themselves, conceiving they have nothing to fear, crying peace, peace, when there is none; let me intreat you, my friends, to pay attention, and ask if there is nothing that suits you.—Sure I am you will easily observe, that the world is made up of two armies; one fighting the battles of the Lord, and the other those of the devil; and if you are unacquainted with the Christian's armour, you prove on whose side you are enlisted, and whom you serve; and if so, you are not inactive in your opposition to God; consider, who ever fought against him

*and prospered? The contest will be dreadful to you.—See what he says, “ Let the potsherd strive with potsherds of the earth, but woe to him that striveth with his Maker.” Is. xlv. 9. And in order to convince you of your folly, he asks, “ Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Is. xxvii. 4. Let Pharaoh, Sennacherib, and a Julian, convince you of your folly: whilst you are living an enemy to God, you are an enemy to your best interest, your present pay may be pleasant, but the wages of sin is death, Rom. vi. 23. what will the end be, if grace prevent not? but ruin and destruction, when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire; taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.—The day of death will soon arrive, when every matter that relates to eternity will be settled, and whatever may be your views or determinations now, you must remember, you will have no power in that day, and there will be no discharge in that war; and God says that wickedness shall not deliver those who are given to it, Ecc. viii. 8. But should your mind be convinced that God is just, and you begin to fear that he will pursue until he satisfies his vengeance, in banishing you from his presence for ever, you need not despair.—The gospel of peace is still sounding, and its language is the language of peace to every one who may be made willing to throw away the weapons of their rebellion; the arms of mercy are open, and the greatest traitor is encouraged to return, Is. lv. 7. That the reader of every description may be profited, and God glorified, is the prayer of the most unworthy of the Lord’s servants,*

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Dear Sir,

*YOU* have desired me to say something in favor of Gurnall's excellent work. His CHRISTIAN ARMOUR is its own recommendation to all who love divine truth, sound experience, and evangelical piety.

*If a firm adherence to all the truth, united with an earnest contention for it, crowned with a constant perseverance therein, characterizes a faithful Minister of the new Covenant, surely, Gurnall must shine as a star of the first magnitude.*

*In his religion there was no mean unmanly conformity to the fashionable systems of the times: his tenets were not of an amphibious kind; he had not learnt the fine art to trim and temporize, and so confound error with truth, and make another Gospel suited to the corrupt taste of worldly wisdom, wealth and pride.*

*Here the true philosopher, the faithful minister, the fervent believer, and the trembling sinner, may find improvement and strong consolation.*

S. LYNDALL.

Gloucester-Terrace,  
Oct, 1804.



## RECOMMENDATION.

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*IT is with peculiar pleasure I have perused this invaluable Work for experimental and practical divinity: Few, if any, exceed it in the English language—it abounds with original thoughts, happy expositions of various passages of Scripture, faithful addresses to the conscience, and the most powerful arguments to excite to diligence and duty. The language indeed is plain, but the matter is so rich that a spiritual mind cannot fail to add to it's stores in perusing it. That great man, Mr. Toplady, had so high an opinion of it that he transcribed various parts of it into his common-place book, and I do not hesitate to say that it is one of the most useful Works that a Divine or a private Christian can read. That it may be extensively read and prove a blessing to thousands is the earnest Prayer of*

*Yours,*

C. BUCK.

---

*To my Dearly Beloved Friends and Neighbours,*  
*the Inhabitants of LAVENHAM.*

---

My Dear FRIENDS,

SOLOMON saith, *The desire of a man is his kindness, and a poor man is better than a liar*, Prov. xix, 22. If you be of his mind, I dare promise these notes, (which I here devote to your service) a kind acceptance at your hands. You will find me to be the *poor man*, by the mite I present you with; but the hearty desire of your eternal happiness from which it comes, will (I hope) clear me from being *the liar*. I never could be so serviceable to you, as many Ministers are to their people, having been with you in much weakness, and still it is the good pleasure of God I should be staked down to a short tedder of strength and other abilities; I have reason therefore, (that I may, though not recompence that want, yet express my deep sense thereof) to crowd the more love into the little I can do for you. And truly my heart is enlarged to you, and to God for you. If any thing makes me loth to be gone into another world, (which my dropping house bids me above many to prepare for) it is not the least, to think I shall leave no more of you walking in the way to eternal life, and you who are on your way thither, in no closer Gospel-order  
for



for your mutual help and comfort in your journey: yea, while I am among you, little do you think how much of your poor Minister's life lies at your mercy. If I should measure my life by the joy of it, then in uprightness I can say with *Paul*, I live as I see any of you stand fast in the Lord, and die as I see others stand fast in their sins, not to be moved with all the entreaties of the Gospel which have wooed you. And why should not the life of your souls be much more precious in your own sight than mine? But I forbear; I would not willingly be thought, as some husbands are, to be kinder to you abroad before strangers, than I am at home.

What I present you with in this Treatise, is a dish from your own table, and so (I hope) will go down the better. You cannot despise it (though the fare be mean) except you will blame yourselves who chose the Cook. I cannot be earnest with others, to bestow so much time as to read over these plain Sermons, lest it should be to their loss; it were but to call them from gathering sheaves in the more fruitful labours of others, to glean a few ears, and those but thin also in mine; yet with you, my people, I may be a little bold. Physicians say, the mother's milk though not so weighty as anothers, if no noxious humour be tasted in it, because natural, is more proper for the child than a stranger's. And I think, it would not be an error, if I should say it held in the milk which the Minister gives to his flock. A people conscientiously lying at the breasts of their own Minister, (if the milk he gives be wholesome) may expect the blessing of God for their nourishment, though it has not so much lusciousness to please the curious taste as some others. Well, whatever these Sermons were, some of those few spirits which you found in hearing, will be missing in the reading of them. It is as easy to paint fire with the heat, as with pen and ink

to commit that to paper which occurs in preaching. There is as much difference between a Sermon in the Pulpit, and printed in a book, as between milk in the warm breast, and in a sucking bottle, yet what it loseth in the lively taste, is recompenced by the convenience of it. The book may be at hand when the Preacher cannot; and truly, that's the chief end of printing, that 'as the bottle and spoon is used when the mother is sick or out of the way; so the book, to quiet the Christian and stay his stomach in the absence of the Ordinance. He that readeth Sermons and good books at home to save his pains of going to hear, is a thief to his soul in a religious habit: he consults for his ease, but not for his profit; he eats cold meat when he may have hot: He hazards the losing the benefit of both by contemning of one. If the Spouse could have had her beloved at home, she needed not to have coursed the streets and waited on the public. O what need we offer sacrilege for sacrifice, rob God of one duty to pay him another? He hath laid our work in better order; one wheel would not interfere with another, if we did more regularly. A chief part of *David's* Arithmetic of numbering our days lies in what we call division, as to cast the account of this our short life so, as to divide the whole sum thereof into the several portions of time due for the performing of every duty in. An instrument is not in tune, except it have all the strings, and those will not makè good music, if the Musician hath not wisdom to cause every string to speak in its due time; the Christian is not in tune, except he takes in all the duties of his place and calling, neither will the performance of them be harmonious in God's ear, if every one be not done in its proper season. O my friends, labour not only to do the duty of your place, but that duty in its own place also. Hear when you should hear. Know your time for closet,  
and

and time for shop : and when your retiring hour comes, a few minutes now and then spent in taking a repetition of what formerly you heard, shall not another day be reckoned with your lost time. The subject of the Treatise is solemn, *A War between the Saint and Satan*, and that so bloody, that the cruelest which ever was fought by men, will be found but sport and child's play to this. Alas, what is the killing of bodies to destroying of souls? 'Tis a sad meditation indeed, to think how many thousands have been sent to the grave in a few late years among us by the sword of man ; but far more astonishing, to consider how many of those may be sent to hell by the sword of God's wrath. 'Tis a spiritual war you shall read of, and that not a history of what was fought many ages past, but of what now is doing, the Tragedy is at present acting, and that not at the furthest end of the world, but what concerns thee and every one that reads it. The stage whereon this war is fought, is every man's soul. Here is no neuter in this war, the whole world is engaged in the quarrel, either for God against Satan, or for Satan against God. It was a great question some years past, Who are you for? The not giving a good account to which hath cost many a life. My dear friends, think solemnly what answer you mean to give to God and conscience, when they in a dying hour shall ask every one of you, Who art thou for? 'Tis an incomparable mercy, that you are yet where you may choose your side : It will not be ever so, may be not a day to an end. If once in another world, you must then stand to your colours, yet you may run from the Devil's quarters, and be taken into Christ's pay. The drum beats in the Gospel for volunteers. O, the Lord make you willing in the day of his power. I know you all would be on the surest side. O what can you be sure of, while under the  
 Devil's

Devil's ensign, but damnation? The curse of God cleaves to him and all that takes part with him. O let not the little plunder and spoil of sinful pleasures and pelf, bewitch you still to follow his camp. What is that soldier better for his booty he gets in a fight, who before he can get off with it, is slain upon the place? 'Tis that thou must certainly look for. The piece is charged, and aim taken at thy breast, which will be thy eternal death if thou persist. God's threatenings will go off at last, and then where art thou? where, but in hell, where thy wedge of gold and Babylonish garment, thy wages of unrighteousness will do thee little stead? O Neighbours, I am loth to leave you in the way where God's bullets fly; but I must have a word for you, my Christian friends, who have espoused Christ's quarrel, and are in the field against Satan. My heart is towards you, who have thus willingly offered yourselves among the Lord's people to his help against the mighty. He can destroy him without you, but he takes your love as kindly as if he could not. God hath sent me (as *Jesse* did *David*) with this little present to you and the rest of my brethren that are in his camp. May it be but to the strengthening of your hearts and hands in fighting the Lord's battles, and I shall bless God that put it into my heart thus to visit you. O hold on, dear friends, in your Christian warfare, let none take the crown from you. *Whet your courage at the throne of grace*, from whence all your recruits of soul-strength come. *Send faith oft up the hill of the promise*, to see and bring you the certain news of Christ's coming to you, yea, for you, and assured victory with him. *Read the exploits*, which Christ's worthies by faith have done, and in their conquests read your own, for in them *he spake with us*, as the Prophet of *Jacob*. *Be thankful* for every victory you get, and let not the  
howl-

howling wilderness, yet before you, put the song of your praises for temptations past out of tune, yet rejoice with trembling, as those who are still in your enemies country, and must keep by the sword what you get by the sword : *Be sure you stand in close order amongst yourselves ;* These times give us too many sad examples of such, who first fell from communion with their Brethren; and then into the devourers hand; straglers are soon snap'd; you will find you are safest in a body. *Take heed of a private spirit;* let not only your particular safety, but of the whole Army of Saints be in your eye and care, especially that company in which you march, (Congregation I mean;) that soldier which can see an enemy in fight with his brethren, and not help them, it makes the more easy for the enemy to slay himself at last; Say not therefore, *Am I my brothers keeper.* God would not keep him that cared not to keep his brother. Watch over one another, not to play the Critic on your brothers failings, and triumph when he halts, but to help him up if he falls, or if possible, to keep him from falling by a timely rescue, as *Abishai* came to *David's* succour. *Keep your rank and file.* We see what advantage Satan hath got in these loose times, since we have learnt to fight him out of order, and the private soldier, (Christian I mean) hath taken the officers work out of his hands. *Harden yourselves against the scandals, which the cowardice and treachery of false brethren hath given you.*

He is the right soldier that is not discouraged by those that run from, or are slain in the battle; but still presseth on to victory, though he goes to it over the backs of others that are killed upon the place. In a word, *Disintangle your hearts what you can from the love of, and distracting cares of this present world. No man that warreth intangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that ye may please him*

*him who hath chosen him to be a soldier, 2 Tim. 2. 4.* If it behoves any to have their Will ready made, and their worldly interests set at some stay, then surely the soldier: if any soldier, then the Christian. Get but once your hearts mortified to the world, and care rolled upon God, for name, estate, and relations, and then you are fit to march wherever Christ will lead you. The want of this hath made many run home to save their own private stake, when they should have been in the field for Christ. And now, my Christian friends, march on, not in the confidence of your Armour, but in the power of his might, who hath promised shortly to subdue Satan under your feet. I have done, only must crave pardon of you, for rending this part of the Treatise from the other, which neither my little strength or leisure would suffer me to grasp at once.

But this having first put forth its hand in preaching, can make no great breach upon that, though it get the start a little in printing. Let me therefore, dear friends, (if God shall make this imperfect birth any way serviceable to your faith,) humbly desire, that you would so continue to strive at the throne of grace for a blessing on my poor Ministry among you, so also lift up a prayer, that strength may be given, to bring forth what of this yet is undelivered. I do not send you thither where I intend not to meet you, but shall desire grace to be found faithful in striving with you, and for you, that amongst those who find any spiritual advantage from my weak labours, you to whom they are chiefly devoted may not receive the least.

*Lavenham,*  
Jan. 1. 1655.

So prayeth your affectionate,  
though unworthy Minister,

WILLIAM GURNALL.

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THE  
CHRISTIAN  
IN  
*COMPLETE ARMOUR.*

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INTRODUCTION.

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FINALLY, MY BRETHREN, BE STRONG IN THE LORD,  
AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT, Eph. vi. 10.

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PAUL was now in bonds, yet not so close kept as to be denied pen and paper; God (it seems) gave him some favour in the sight of his enemies: Paul was Nero's prisoner, but Nero was much more God's. And while God had work for Paul, he found him friends both in court and prison.

Let prosecutors send the saints to prison, God can provide a keeper for their turn.

But how doth this great Apostle spend his time in prison? Not in publishing invectives against those (though the worst of men) who had laid him in; a piece of zeal which the holy sufferers of those times were little acquainted with: Nor in political councils, how he might wind himself out of his trouble, by sordid flattery of, or sinful compliance with, the  
Vol. I A great

great ones of the times. Some would have used any pick-lock to have opened a passage to their liberty, and not scrupled whether they got out at the door or window: But this holy man was not so fond of liberty, or life, as to purchase them at the least hazard to the gospel. He knew too much of another world, to bid so high for the enjoyment of this; and therefore he is regardless what his enemies can do with him, well knowing he should go to Heaven whether they would or no; No, the great care which lay upon him, was for the Churches of Christ; as a faithful steward he labours to set the House of God in order before his departure. We read of no dispatches sent to Court to procure his liberty; but many to the Churches to help them to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free. There is no such way to be even with the devil and his instruments, for all their spite against us, as by doing what good we can wherever we come. The Devil had as good have let Paul alone, for he no sooner comes into prison but he falls a preaching, at which the gates of Satan's prison fly open, and poor sinners come forth. Happy for Onesimus that Paul was sent to gaol; God had an errand for Paul to do to him and others, which the Devil never dreamed of. Nay, he doth not only preach in prison, but, that he may do the Devil all the mischief he can, he sends his epistles to the Churches, that tasting his spirit in his afflictions, and reading his faith, now ready to be offered up, they might much more be confirmed, amongst which Ephesus was not least in his thoughts, as you may perceive by his abode with them two years together, *Acts* xix. 10. as also by his sending for the Elders of this Church as far as Miletus, in his last journey to Jerusalem, *Acts* xx. 17. to take his farewell of them, as never to see their faces in this world more. And surely the sad impression which that heart-breaking departure left upon the spirits of these Elders, yea the whole Church, (by them acquainted with this mournful news) might stir up Paul now in prison, to write unto this Church, that having so much of his spirit, yea, of the spirit of the gospel left in their hands to converse with, they might more patiently take the news of his death.

In the former part of this Epistle he soars high in the mysteries of Faith. In the latter, according to his usual method, he descends to application; where we find him contracting



tracting all those truths, as beams together, in a powerful exhortation, the more to enkindle their hearts, and powerfully persuade them to *walk worthy of their vocation*, chap. iv. 1. which is done, when in the Christian's life the grace of the gospel shines forth in the power of holiness on every side, as a candle in a chrystal glass; not in a dark lanthorn, light one way and dark another.

Now having set every one in his proper place, about his particular duty; as a wise general after he has ranged his army, and drawn them forth into rank and file, he makes the following speech at the head of this Ephesian camp, all in martial phrases as best suiting the Christian's calling, which is a continued warfare with the world, and the Prince of the world. The speech itself contains two parts.

First, a short but sweet and powerful encouragement, v. 10.

Secondly, The other part is spent in several directions, for their managing this war the more successfully, with some motives here and there sprinkled among them. To begin with the first.

The word of encouragement to battle. With this he begins his speech: *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord*; the best way indeed to prepare them for the following directions. A soul deeply possessed with fear, and dispirited with strong impressions of danger, is in no posture for counsel. As we see in an army when put to flight by some sudden alarm, or apprehension of danger, it is hard rallying them into order till the fright occasioned thereby is over; therefore the Apostle first raiseth up their spirits, *Be strong in the Lord*: As if he should say, perhaps some drooping souls find their hearts fail them, while they see their enemies so strong, and they so weak; so numerous, and they so few; so well appointed, and they so naked and unarmed; so skilful and expert at arms, but they green and raw soldiers: Let not these, or any other thoughts dismay you; but with undaunted courage march on, *and be strong in the Lord*, on whose performance lies the stress of the battle, and not on your skill or strength: It is not the least of a minister's care and skill in dividing the word, so to press the Christian's duty, as not to oppress his spirit with the weight of it, by laying it on the creature's own shoulders, and not on the Lord's strength, as here our Apostle teacheth us.

In

In this verse, First, here is a familiar compellation ; *My brethren.*

Secondly, Here is the exhortation ; *Be strong.*

Thirdly, Here is a cautionary direction annexed to the exhortation ; *In the Lord.*

Fourthly, Here is an encouraging amplification of the direction ; *And in the power of his might,* or in his mighty power.

## CHAP. I.

*Of Christian courage and resolution, wherefore necessary, and how obtained.*

WE shall wave the compellation, and begin with the exhortation, *Be strong*, that is, be of good courage, so commonly used in scripture phrase, *2 Chron. xxxii. 7. Be strong and courageous.* So *Isa. xxv. 4. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong.* Or, unite all the powers of your souls, and muster up your whole force, for you will have use for all you can make or get. From whence the point is this.

*Doct.* The Christian of all men needs courage and resolution. Indeed there is nothing he doth as a Christian, or can do, but is an act of valour: A cowardly spirit is beneath the lowest duty of a Christian, *Josh. i. 7. Be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest—* What? stand in battle against those warlike nations? No, *but that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee.* It requires more prowess and greatness of spirit to obey God faithfully, than to command an army of men; to be a Christian than a captain. What seems less, than for a Christian to pray? yet this cannot be performed aright without a princely spirit: As Jacob is said to behave himself like a Prince, when he did but pray; for which he came out of the field God's Bannerite. Indeed if you call that prayer, which a carnal person performs, nothing

is more poor and dastardlike. Such an one is as great a stranger to this enterprise, as the Craven soldier is to the exploits of a valiant chieftain. The Christian in prayer comes up close to God, with an humble boldness of faith, and takes hold of him, wrestles with him; yea, will not let him go without a blessing, and all this in the face of his own sins, and divine justice, which let fly upon him from the fiery mouth of the law; while the other's boldness in prayer is but the child, either of ignorance in his mind, or hardness in his heart; whereby not feeling his sins, and not knowing his danger, he rushes upon duty with a blind confidence, which soon quells when conscience awakes, and gives him the alarm, that his sins are upon him, as the Philistines on Samson; alas! then in a fright the poor spirited wretch throws down his weapon, flies the presence of God with guilty Adam, and dares not look him in the face. Indeed there is no duty in a Christian's whole course of walking with God, or acting for God, but is lined with many difficulties, which shoot like enemies through the hedges at him, whilst he is marching towards Heaven: so that he is obliged to dispute every inch of ground as he goes. They are only a few noble spirited souls (who dare take Heaven by force) that are fit for this calling. For the further proof of this point, see some few pieces of service that every Christian engageth in.

First, The Christian is to proclaim and prosecute an irreconcilable war against his bosom sins; those sins which have lain nearest his heart, must now be trampled under his feet. So David, *I have kept myself from my iniquity*. Now what courage and resolution doth this require? You think Abraham was tried to purpose, when called to take his son, *his son Isaac, his only son whom he loved*, Gen xxii. 2. and offer him up with his own hands, and no other; yet what was that to this? Soul, take thy lust, thy only lust, which is the child of thy dearest love, thy Isaac, the sin which has caused most joy and laughter, from which thou hast promised thyself the greatest return of pleasure or profit; as ever thou lookest to see my face with comfort, lay hands on it and offer it up: pour out the blood of it before me; run the sacrificing knife of mortification into the very heart of it; and this freely, joyfully, (for it is no pleasing sacrifice that is offered with a countenance cast down) and all this now, before thou hast one embrace more from it. Truly this is a hard chapter, flesh and blood cannot bear this saying; our lust will not lie

lie so patiently on the altar, as Isaac, or as a *Lamb that is brought to the slaughter, which is dumb*, but will roar and shriek; yea, even shake and rend the heart with their hideous outcries. Who is able to express the conflicts, the wrestlings, the convulsions of spirit the Christian feels, before he can bring his heart to this work? Or who can fully set forth the art, the rhetorical insinuations, with which such a lust will plead for itself? One while Satan will extenuate and mince the matter: It is but a little one, O spare it, and thy soul shall live for all that: Another while he flatters the soul with the secrecy of it; Thou mayest keep me and thy credit also; I will not be seen abroad in thy company to shame thee among thy neighbours: shut me up in the most retired room thou hast in thy heart, from the hearing of others, if thou wilt only let me now and then have the wanton embraces of thy thoughts and affections in secret. If that cannot be granted, then Satan will seem only to desire execution may be stay'd awhile, as Jephtha's daughter of her father; *Let me alone a month or two, and then do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth*, Judg. xvii. 2, 37. well knowing few such reprieved lusts, but at last obtain their full pardon; yea, recover their favour with the soul. Now what resolution doth it require to break through such violence and importunity, and notwithstanding all this to do present execution? Here the valiant sword-men of the world have shewed themselves mere cowards, who have come out of the field with victorious banners, and then lived, yea, died slaves to a bare lust at home. As one could say of a great Roman champion, who, as he rode in his triumphant chariot through Rome, had his eye never off a courtesan that walked along the street. Behold, how this goodly Captain, that conquered such potent armies, is himself conquered by one silly woman.

Secondly, The Christian is to walk singularly, not after the world's guise, *Rom. xii. 2*. We are commanded not to be conformed to this world; that is, not to accommodate ourselves to the corrupt customs of the world. The Christian must not be of such a complying nature, to cut the coat of his profession according to the fashion of the times, or the humour of the company he falls into; like that courtier, who being asked how he could keep his preferment in such changing times, which one while had a Prince for Popery, another while against Popery? Answered, He was *E Salice*,

*non ex Quercu ortus*: He was not a stubborn oak, but bending osier, that could yield to the wind: No, the Christian must stand fixed to his principles, and not change his habit; but freely shew what country-man he is by his holy constancy in the truth. Now, what an odium, what snares, what dangers doth this singularity expose the Christian to? Some will hoot and mock him, as one in a Spanish fashion would be laughed at in your streets. Thus Michal flouted David. Indeed the world counts the Christian, for his singularity of life, the only fool; which I have thought gave the first occasion to that nick-name whereby men commonly express a silly man or a fool: Such a one (say they) is a mere Abraham; that is, in the world's account, a fool. But why an Abraham? because Abraham did that which carnal reason (the world's idol) laughs at as mere folly; he left a present estate in his father's house, to go he knew not whither, to receive an inheritance he knew not when. And truly such fools all the saints are branded for, by the wise world. *You know the man and his communication*, said Jehu to his companions, asking what that mad fellow came for, who was no other than a prophet, 2 *Kings* ix. 11. Now this requires courage to despise the shame, which the Christian must expect to meet withal for his singularity. Shame is that which proud nature most disdains: To avoid which, many durst not *confess Christ openly*, John viii. 13. Many lose Heaven, because they are ashamed to go in a fool's coat thither. Again, as some will mock, so others will persecute to death, merely for this non-conformity in the Christian's principles and practices to them. This was the trap laid for the three children; they must dance after Nebuchadnezzar's pipe, or burn. This was the plot laid to ensnare Daniel, who walked so unblameably, that his very enemies gave him this testimony, that he had no fault, but his singularity in his religion, *Dan.* vi. 5. 'Tis a great honour to a Christian; yea, to religion itself, when all their enemies can say, is, they are precise, and will not do as we do. Now in such a case as this when the Christian must turn or burn; leave praying, or become a prey to the cruel teeth of bloody men; how many political retreats, and self-preserving distinctions would a cowardly unresolved heart invent? the Christian that hath so great opposition, had need be well secured on the saddle of his profession, or else he will be soon dismounted.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The Christian must keep on his way to Heaven in the midst of all the scandals that are cast upon the ways of God, by the apostasy and foul falls of false professors. There were ever such in the church, who by their sad miscarriages in judgment and practice, having laid a stone of offence in the way of profession, at which weak Christians are ready to make a stand (as they at the bloody body of Asahel, *2 Sam.* ii. 23.) not knowing whether they may venture any further in their profession, seeing such (whose gifts they so much admired) lie before them, wallowing in the blood of their slain profession; of zealous professors, to prove, perhaps, fiery persecutors; of strict performers of religious duties, irreligious Atheists; no more like the men they were some years past, than the vale of Sodom, (now a bog and quagmire) is, to what it was, when for fruitfulness compared to the garden of the Lord. We had need have a holy resolution to bear up against such discouragement, and not to faint; as Joshua who lived to see the whole camp of Israel (a very few excepted) revolting, and in their hearts turning back to Egypt, and yet with an undaunted spirit maintained his integrity; yea, resolved, though not a man beside would bare him company, yet he would serve the Lord.

Fourthly, The Christian must trust in a withdrawing God, *Isa.* i. 10. *Let him that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.* This requires a holy boldness of faith indeed to venture into God's presence, as Esther into Ahasuerus', when no smile is to be seen on his face, no golden sceptre of the promise perceived by the soul, as held forth to embolden it to come near, then to press in with this noble resolution, *if I perish, I perish*: nay more, to trust not only in a withdrawing, but a *killing God*, *Job* xiii. 15. Not when his love is hid, but when his wrath breaks forth: now for a soul to make his approaches to God by a recumbency of faith, while God seems to fire upon it, and shoot his frowns like envenomed arrows into it: this is hard work, and will try the Christian's metal to purpose. Yet such a masculine spirit we find in that poor woman of Canaan, who takes up the bullets Christ shot at her, and with an humble boldness of faith sends them back again in her prayer.

Fifthly, The believer is to persevere in his christian course to the end of his life; his work and his life must go off the stage together. This adds weight to every other difficulty  
 . of

of the Christian's calling ; We have known many who have gone into the field, and liked the work of a soldier for a battle or two, but soon have had enough, and came running home again ; but few can bear it as a constant trade. Many are soon engaged in holy duties ; easily persuaded to take up a profession of religion, and as easily persuaded to lay it down ; like the new moon, which shines a little in the first part of the night, but is down before half the night be gone ; lightsome professors in their youth, whose old age is wrapt up in thick darkness of sin and wickedness : O this persevering is a hard word ! this taking up the cross daily, this praying always, this watching night and day, and never laying aside our cloaths and armour ; I mean, indulging ourselves to remit and unbend in our holy waiting on God, and walking with God, this sends many sorrowful away from Christ ; yet this is the saint's duty, to make religion his every day work, without any vacation from one end of the year to the other. These few instances are enough to shew what need the Christian hath of resolution. The application follows.

Use. 1. This gives us then a reason why there are so many professors, and so few Christians indeed ; so many that run, and so few obtain ; so many go into the field against Satan, and so few come out conquerors ; because all have a desire to be happy, but few have courage and resolution to grapple with the difficulties that meet them in their way to happiness. All Israel came joyfully out of Egypt under Moses' conduct ; yea, and a mixed multitude with them ; but when their bellies were a little pinched with hunger, and their greedy desires of a present Canaan deferred ; yea, instead of peace and plenty, war and penury ; they (like faint-hearted soldiers) were ready to fly from their colours, and make a dishonourable retreat into Egypt. Thus the greatest part of those who profess the gospel, when they come to be tried what they will do, deny, or endure for Christ, grow sick of their enterprize : Alas ! their hearts fail them : they like the waters of Bethlehem, but if they must dispute their passage with so many enemies, they will even content themselves with their own cistern, and leave Heaven to others that will venture more for it. O how many part with Christ at this cross-way ! like Orpah, that go a furlong or two then kiss and leave him ; loth, indeed, to lose Heaven, but more loth to buy it at so dear a

rate. Like some green heads, that childishly make choice of some sweet trade, from a liquorish tooth they have to the junkets it affords: but meeting with sour sauce of labour and toil that goes with them, they give in, and are weary of their service; the sweet bait of religion hath drawn many to nibble at it, who are offended with the hard service it calls to; it requires another spirit than the world can give or receive, to follow Christ fully.

Use 2. Let this then exhort you, Christians, to labour for this holy resolution and prowess, which is so needful for your christian profession, that without it you cannot be what you profess. The violent and valiant are they who take Heaven by force: Cowards never won Heaven. Say not, thou hast royal blood running in thy veins, and art begotten of God, except thou canst prove thy pedigree by this heroic spirit, to dare to be holy in spite of men or devils. The eagle tries her young ones by the sun; Christ tries his children by their courage, that dare look on the face of death and danger for his sake, *Mark* viii. 34, 35. O how uncomely a sight is it, a bold sinner, and a fearful saint! one resolved to be wicked, and a Christian wavering in his holy course; to see guilt put innocency to flight, and Hell keep the field, impudently braving it with displaying banners of open prophaneness, and saints to hide their colours for shame, or run from them for fear, who should rather wrap themselves in them, and die upon the place, than thus betray the glorious name of God, which is called upon by them to the scorn of the uncircumcised. Take heart therefore, O ye saints, and be strong, your cause is good, God himself espouseth your quarrel, he hath appointed his own Son general of the field, called *the Captain of our Salvation*, *Heb.* ii. He shall lead you on with courage, and bring you off with honour. He lived and died for you, he will live and die with you; for mercy and tenderness to his soldiers, none like him. Trajan, 'tis said, rent his cloaths to bind up his soldiers' wounds; but Christ poured out his blood, as balm to heal his saints' wounds. For prowess, none to compare with him; he never turned his head from danger; no, not when Heli's malice, and Heaven's justice appeared in the field against him: *Knowing all that should come upon him, he went forth and said, Whom seek ye?* *John* xviii. 4. For success unparalleled; he never lost a battle; even when he lost his life he won the field, carrying the spoils thereof in the triumphant chariot of his ascension to Heaven with him; where he makes an open shew



shew of them, to the unspeakable joy of saints and angels. You march in the midst of gallant spirits, your fellow soldiers, every one the son of a Prince: Behold some (enduring with you here below great afflictions and temptations) take Heaven by storm and force: Others you may see, after many assaults, repulses, and rallyings of their faith and patience, get upon the walls of Heaven, conquerors; from whence they, as it were, look down, and call you, their fellow brethren on earth, to march up the hill after them, crying aloud, "Fall on, and the city is your own as now it is ours; who after a few days' conflict, are now crowned with Heaven's glory; one moment's enjoyment of which hath dried up all our tears, healed all our wounds, and made us forget the sharpness of the fight, in the joy of our present victory." In a word, Christians, God and Angels are spectators, observing how you quit yourselves like children of the Most High: Every exploit of your faith, against sin and Satan, causeth a shout in Heaven, while you valiantly prostrate this temptation, scale that difficulty, and regain the ground you even now lost out of your enemies' hands. Your dear Saviour (who stands by with a reserve for your relief at a pinch) his very heart leaps within him for joy, to see the proof of your love to him, and zeal for him in all your combats, and will not forget all the faithful service you have done in his wars on earth, but when thou comest out of the field, will receive thee with the like joy, as he was entertained himself by his Father, at his return to Heaven. Now, Christian, if thou meanest thus courageously to bear up against all opposition, in thy march to Heaven, mark thy principles are well fixed, or else thy heart will be unstable, and an unstable heart is weak as water, it cannot excel in courage. Two things are required to fix our principles.

First, An established judgment in the truth of God. He that knows not well what, or whom he fights for, may soon be persuaded to change his side, or at least stand neuter. Such may be found that go for professors, that can hardly give an account what they hope for, or whom they hope in; yet Christians they must be thought, though they run before they know their errand; or if they have some principles they go upon, they are so unsettled, that every wind blows them down, like loose tiles from the house-top. Blind zeal is soon put to a shameful retreat, while holy resolution,

built on fast principles, lifts up its head like a rock in the midst of the waves. *Those that know their God shall be strong and do exploits*, Dan. xi. 32. The angel told Daniel who were the men that would stand to their tackling, and bear up for God in that hour, both of temptation and persecution, which should be brought upon them by Antiochus; not all the Jews, some of them should be corrupted by flatteries, others scared by threats out of their profession; only a few of fixed principles, who knew their God whom they served, and were grounded in their religion: these should be strong, and do exploits; that is, to flatteries they should be incorruptible, and by power and force unconquerable.

Secondly, A sincere aim at the right end in our profession: Let a man be never so knowing in the things of Christ, if his aim be not right in his profession, his principles will hang very loose, he will not venture much, or far, for Christ; no more, no further than can save his own stake. A hypocrite may shew some mettle at hand, some courage for a trial at conquering some difficulties; but he will shew himself a jade at length. He that hath a false end in his profession will soon come to an end of it, when he is pinched on the toe where his corn is: I mean, called to deny what his naughty heart aimed at all this while, now his heart fails him, he can go no further, O take heed of those banes to our profit, pleasure, honor, or any thing beneath Christ and Heaven; for they will take away your heart, as the prophet saith of wine and women; that is, our love; and if our love be taken away, there will be little courage left for Christ. How courageous was Jehu at first? And he tells the world, it is zeal for God: But why doth his heart fail him before half his work be done? His heart was never right set: that very thing that stirred up his zeal at first, at last quenched it, and that was his ambition; his desire of a kingdom made him zealous against Ahab's house, to cut them off; which done, and he quietly settled, he dared not go through with God's work, lest he should lose what he got, by provoking the people with a thorough reformation. Like some soldiers, when once they meet with a rich booty at the sacking of some town, are spoiled for fighting ever after.

CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

*Of the Saints strength, where it lies, and wherefore laid up in God.*

THE second branch of the words followeth, which contains a cautionary direction. Having exhorted the saints at Ephesus, and in them all believers, to a holy resolution and courage in their warfare; lest this should be mistaken, and beget in them an opinion of their own strength for the battle, the Apostle leads them out of themselves for this strength, even to the Lord; *Be strong in the Lord.* From whence observe,

Doct. That the Christian's strength lies in the Lord, not in himself. The strength of an earthly general lies in his troops; he flies, as a great commander once said to his soldiers, upon their wings; if their feathers be clipt, their power broken, he is lost: But in the army of saints, the strength of every saint, yea, of the whole host of saints, lies in the Lord of Hosts. God can overcome his enemies without their hands; but they cannot so much as defend themselves without his arm. 2. It is one of God's names, *the strength of Israel*, 1 Sam. xv. 19. He was the strength of David's heart; without him this valiant worthy (that could, when held up in his arms, defy him that defied a whole army) behaves himself strangely for fear, at a word or two that dropt from the Philistine's mouth. He was the strength of his hands, *He taught his fingers to fight*, and so he is the strength of all his saints in this war against sin and Satan. Some propound a question, whether there be a sin committed in the world in which Satan hath not a part? But if the question were, whether there be any holy action performed without the special assistance of God concurring? that is resolved, *John xv. 5. Without me you can do nothing.* Thinking strength of God, 2 Cor. iii. 5. *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.* We Apostles, we saints have habitual grace, yet this lies like water at the bottom of a well, which will not ascend with all our pumping, till God pours in his exciting grace,  
and

and then it comes. To will is more than to think; to exert, our will into action, more than both; these are of God, *Phil. ii. 13. It is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.* He makes the heart new, and having made it fit for heavenly motion, setting every wheel (as it were) in its right place, then he winds it up by his actuating grace, and sets it going, the thoughts stirring, and the will moving toward the holy object presented; yet here the chariot is set, and cannot ascend the hill of action till God puts his shoulder to the wheel, *Rom. vii. To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.* God is at the bottom of the ladder, and at the top also, the author and finisher; yea, helping and lifting the soul at every round, in his ascent to any holy action. Well, now the Christian is set on work, how long will he keep close to it? Alas, poor soul! no longer than he is held up by the same hand that impowered him at first. He hath soon wrought out the strength received, and therefore to maintain the tenure of a holy course, there must be renewing strength from Heaven every moment, which David knew; and therefore when his heart was in as holy a frame as ever he felt it, and his people by their free-will offering declared the same; yet even then he prays, that God would *keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of his people, and establish their hearts to him,* *1 Chron. xxix. 18.* He adored the mercy that made them willing, and then he implores his further grace to strengthen them, and tie a knot, that these precious pearls, newly strung on their hearts, might not slip off. The Christian, when fullest of divine communications, is but a glass without a foot, he cannot stand, or hold what he hath received any longer than God holds him in his strong hand. Therefore Christ, when bound for Heaven, and ready to take his leave of his children, bespeaks his Father's care of them in his absence, *John xvii. Father, keep them:* As if he had said, they must not be left alone, they are poor helpless children, that can neither stand or go without assistance: they will lose the grace I have given them, and fall into those temptations which I kept them from, while I was with them, if they be out of thine eye or arm but one moment; and therefore, *Father, keep them.*

Again, Consider the Christian, as addressing himself to any duty of God's worship; still his strength is in the Lord. Would he pray? Where will he find matter for his prayer?

Alas!

Alas! *he knows not what to pray for as he ought.* Let him alone, and he will soon pray himself into some temptation or other, and cry for that which were cruelty in God to give; and therefore God puts words in our mouths; *take words with you and say,* Hos. xiv. 2. Well now he hath put words into his mouth, alas, they will freeze in his very lips, if he hath not some heart-heating affections to thaw them; And where shall this fire be had? Not a spark to be found on his own hearth; except it be some strange fire of natural desires, which will not serve: Whence then must the fire come to thaw the iciness of the heart, but from Heaven? The holy spirit must stretch himself upon the soul (as the prophet on the child) and then the soul will come to some kindly warmth, and heavenly heat in his affections; the spirit must groan, and then the soul will groan; he helps us to these sighs and groans, which turn the sail of prayer: He dissolves the heart, and then it bursts out of the heart by groans of the lips, by heavenly rhetoric; out of the eyes, as from a flood-gate, with tears; yet further, now the creature is enabled to wrestle with God in prayer; what will he get by all this? Suppose he be weak in grace, is he able to pray himself strong, or corruption weak? No, this is not to be found in prayer, as an act of the creature: This drops from Heaven also, *Psal. cxxxviii. 3. In the day that I cried, thou answeredst me, and gavest me strength in my soul.* David received it in duty, but had it not from his duty, but from his God. He did not pray himself strong, but God strengthened him in prayer. Well, cast your eye once more upon the Christian, as engaging in another ordinance of hearing the word preached. The soul's strength to hear the word, is from God, *he opens the heart to attend,* Acts xvi. 14. Yea, he opens the understanding of the saint to receive the word, so as to conceive what it means. It is like Sampson's riddle, which we cannot unfold without his heifer. He opens the womb of the soul to conceive by it, as the understanding to conceive of it, that the barren soul becomes a joyful mother of children. David sat for half a year under the public lectures of the law, and the womb of his heart shut up, till Nathan comes, and God with him; and now is the time of life; he conceives presently; yea, and brings forth in the same day; falls presently into the bitter pangs of sorrow for his sins, which went not over till he had cast them forth in that sweet *Psal. li.* Why should this one word work

more than all the former, but that God now struck in with his word, which he did not before? He is therefore said to teach his people to profit, Isa. xlviii. 17. He sits in Heaven that teacheth hearts. When God's spirit (who is the head-master) shall call a soul from his usher to himself, and say, soul, thou hast not gone the way to thrive by hearing the word; thus, and thus conceive of such a truth, improve such a promise, presently the eyes of his understanding open, and his heart burns within him while he speaks to him. Thus you see the truth of this point, that the Christian's strength is in the Lord. Now we shall give some demonstrations.

## SECT. I.

Reason 1. The first reason may be taken from the nature of the saints and their grace; both are creatures, they and their grace also; now *in esse est deesse creaturæ*. 'Tis in the very nature of the creature to depend on God, its maker, both for being and operation. Can you conceive an accident to be out of its subject, whiteness out of the wall or some other subject? 'Tis as impossible that the creature should be, or act without strength from God. To be, to act in and of himself, is so incommunicable a property of the Deity, that he cannot impart it to his creatures: *God is, and there is none besides him*; when God made the world, it is said, indeed, that he ended his work; that is, of creation: He made no new species and kinds of creatures more; but to this day he hath not ended his work of providence: *Hitherto my Father worketh*, saith Christ, *John v. 17*. That is, in preserving and empowering what he had made, to be and act; and therefore he is said to hold our souls in life. Works of art, which man makes, when finished, may stand some time without the workman's help; as the house, when the carpenter that made it is dead; but God's works of nature and grace are never off his hand; and therefore as the Father is said to work hitherto for the preservation of the works of nature, so the Son, to whom is committed the work of redemption, worketh also. Neither ended he his work when he rose again, any other way than his Father did in the work of creation. God made an end of making, so Christ made an end of purchasing mercy, grace, and glory for believers, by  
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once dying, and as God rested at the end of the creation, so he, when he had wrought eternal redemption, and, *by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*, Heb. i. 3. But he ceaseth not to work by his intercession with God for us, and by his spirit in us for God, whereby he upholds his saints, their graces, and comforts in life, without which they would run to ruin. Thus we see, as grace is a creature, the Christian depends on God for his strength. But further,

Secondly, The Christian's grace is not only a creature, but a weak creature, conflicting with enemies stronger than itself, and therefore cannot keep the field without an auxiliary strength from Heaven. The weakest goes to the wall, if no succour comes in. Grace in this life is but weak, like a King in a cradle, which gives advantage to Satan to carry on his plots more strongly, to the disturbance of this young King's reign in the soul; yea, he would soon make an end of the war, in the ruin of the believer's grace, did not Heaven take the Christian into protection. 'Tis true indeed, grace wherever it is, hath a principle in itself, that makes it desire and endeavour to preserve itself according to its strength; but being overpowered, must perish, except assisted by God, as fire in green wood (which deadens and damps the part kindled) will in time go out, except blown up, or more fire put to that little; so will grace in the heart. God brings his grace into the heart by conquest: Now, as in a conquered city, though some yield and become true subjects to the conqueror; yet others plot how they may shake off this yoke; and therefore it requires the same power to keep, as it did to conquer them. The Christian hath an unregenerate part, that is discontented at this new change in the heart, and disdains as much to come under the sweet government of Christ's sceptre, as the Sodomites that Lot should judge them. What, this fellow, a stranger, controul us? Satan heads this mutinous rout against the Christian: So that if God should not continually reinforce this his new planted colony in the heart, the very natives (I mean corruptions) that are left, would come out of their dens and holes where they lie lurking, and eat up the little grace the holiest on earth hath; it would be as bread to these devourers.

3. A third demonstration may be taken from the grand design which God propounds to himself in the saint's salvation.

tion; yea, in the transaction of it from the first to last; and that is two-fold.

First, God would bring his saints to Heaven in such a way as might be most expressive of his love and mercy to them.

Secondly, He would so express his love and mercy to them, as might rebound back to him in the highest advance of his own glory possible; Now how becoming this is to both, that saints should have all their ability for every step they take in the way to Heaven, will soon appear.

1. This way of communicating strength to saints gives a double accent to God's love and mercy.

First, it distils a sweetness into all that the believer hath or doth when he finds any comfort in his bosom, any enlargement of heart to duty, any support under temptations: To consider whence come all these, what friend sends them in? They come not from my own cistern, or any creature's: O 'tis my God that hath been here, and left this sweet perfume of comfort behind him in my bosom; my God, that hath (unawares to me) filled my sails with the gales of his spirit, and brought me off the flats of my own deadness, where I lay aground. O 'tis his sweet spirit that held my head, stayed my heart in such an affliction and temptation, or else I had gone away in a fainting fit of unbelief.— Can this but endear God to a gracious soul? His succours coming so immediately from Heaven, which would be lost, if the Christian had any strength to help himself (though this stock of strength came at first from God) which, think you, speaks more love and condescension, for a Prince to give a pension to a favourite, on which he may live by his own care; or for this Prince to take the chief care upon himself, and come from day to day to this man's house, and look into his cupboard, and see what provision he hath, what expence he is at, and so constantly to provide for the man from time to time? Possibly some proud spirit, that likes to be his own man, or loves his means better than his Prince, would prefer the former; but one that is ambitious to have the heart and love of his Prince would be ravished with the latter. Thus God doth with his saints;— he comes and looks into their cupboard, sees how they are provided, and sends in accordingly as he finds them. He knows you have need of these things, and you shall have them.



them. He knows you need strength to pray, hear, suffer for him, and *in ipsa hora debetur*.

Secondly, This way of God's dealing with his saints adds to the fulness and stability of their strength. Were the stock in our own hands, we should soon prove broken merchants. God knows we are but leaking vessels; when fullest, we could not hold it long; and therefore to make all sure, he sets us under the streamings forth of his strength; and a leaking vessel, under a cock, gets what it loseth. Thus we have our leakage supplied continually. This was the provision God made for Israel in the wilderness; he clave the rock, and the rock followed them. They had not only a draught at present, but it ran in a stream after them; so that you hear no more of their complaints for water: This rock was Christ. Every believer hath Christ at his back, following him with strength as he goes, for every condition and trial. One flower with the root, is worth many in a posy, which though sweet, do not grow, but wither as we wear them in our bosoms. God's strength, as the root, keeps our grace lively, without which it would die.

2. The second design God hath in his saints' happiness is, that he may so express his mercy and love to them, as may rebound to him in the highest advance of his own glory therein, *Eph.* i. 4, 12. which is fully attained in his way of empowering saints, by a strength not of their own, but of their God's sending. Had God given his saints a stock of grace to have set up with, and left them to the improvement of it, he had been magnified indeed, because it was more than he owed the creature; but not as now, when not only the Christian's first strength to close with Christ is from God, but he is beholden to him for the exercise of that strength, in every action of his christian course. As a child that travels in his father's company, all is paid for, but his father carries the purse, not himself; so the Christian's shot is discharged in every condition, but he cannot say, this I did, or that I suffered; but God wrought all in me, and for me. The very comb of pride is cut here; no room for any self-exalting thoughts. The Christian cannot say, when his faith is strong, this is the child of my own care and watchfulness. Alas, poor Christian! who kept thine eye waking, and stirred up thy care? Was not this the offspring of God, as well as thy faith at first? No saint shall say of

Heaven, when he comes there, This is Heaven which I have built in the power of my might, No, *Jerusalem above is a city, whose builder and maker is God.* Every grace, yea, degree of grace, is a stone in that building, the topstone whereof is laid in glory, where saints shall more plainly see how God was not only founder, to begin, but benefactor also to finish the same. The glory of the work shall not be crumbed and piece-meal'd out, some to God, and some to creature; but all entirely paid in to God, and he acknowledged all in all.

## SECT. II.

Use 1. Is the Christian's strength in the Lord, not in himself? Surely then the christless person must needs be a poor impotent creature, void of all strength and ability of doing any thing of itself towards its own salvation. If the ship launched, rigged, and with her sails spread, cannot stir till the wind is fair, and fills them; much less can the timber that lies in the carpenter's yard hew and frame itself into a ship. If the living tree cannot grow except the root communicates its sap, much less can a dead rotten stake in the hedge, which has no root, live of its own accord. In a word, if a Christian, that hath his spiritual life of grace, cannot exercise this life, without strength from above, then surely, one void of this new life, dead in sins and trespasses, can never be able to beget this in himself, or concur to the production of it. The state of unregeneracy is a state of impotency; *when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly*, Rom. v. 6. And as Christ found the lump of mankind covered with the ruins of their lapsed estate (no more able to raise themselves from under the weight of God's wrath, which lay upon them, than one buried under the rubbish of a fallen house is to free himself of that weight without help) so the spirit finds sinners in as helpless a condition, as unable to repent, or believe on Christ for salvation, as they were of themselves to purchase it. Confounded therefore for ever be the language of those sons of pride, who cry up the power of nature, as if man, with his own brick and slime of natural abilities, were able to rear up such a building, whose top may reach Heaven itself. *It is not of him that willetth or runneth, but of God*

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*that sheweth mercy*, Rom. ix 16. God himself hath scattered such Babel-builders in the imaginations of their hearts, who raiseth this spiritual temple in the souls of men, not by might, nor by a power of their own, but by his spirit; that so grace, grace might be proclaimed before it for ever. And therefore if any yet in their natural estate, would become wise to salvation, let them first become fools in their own eyes, and renounce their carnal wisdom, which perceives not the things of God; and beg wisdom of God, who giveth, and upbraideth not. If any man would have strength to believe, let them become weak, and die to their own; for *by strength shall no man prevail*, 1 Sam. ii. 9.

Use 2. Doth the Christian's strength lie in God, not in himself? This may for ever keep the Christian humble, when most enlarged in duty, most assisted in his Christian course. Remember, Christian, when thou hast thy best suit on, who made it, who paid for it: Thy grace, thy comfort is neither the work of thy own hands, nor the price of thy own desert; be not, for shame, proud of another's cost. That assistance will not long stay which becomes a nurse to thy pride; thou art not Lord of that assistance thou hast. Thy father is wise, who when he alloweth thee most for thy spiritual maintenance, even then keeps the law in his own hands, and can soon curb thee, if thou growest wanton with his grace. Walk humbly therefore before thy God, and husband well that strength thou hast, remembering that it is borrowed strength. *Nemo prodiget quod mendicauit*. Who will waste what he begs? Or who will give that beggar that spends idly his alms? When thou hast most, thou canst not be long from thy God's door. And how canst thou look him in the face for more, who hast embezzled what thou hast received.

## CHAP. III.

*Of acting our Faith on the Almighty Power of God.*

**T**HE third branch followeth, which contains an encouraging amplification annexed to the exhortation, in these words; *And in the power of his might* where a twofold enquiry is requisite for the explication of the phrase. First, What these words import, *The power of his might*; Secondly, What it is to *be strong in the power of his might*.

For the first, *the power of his might*: It is an Hebraism, and imports nothing but his mighty power; like that phrase *Eph. i. 6. To the praise of the glory of his grace*, that is, to the praise of his glorious grace. And his mighty power imports no less then his almighty power; sometimes the Lord is stiled *mighty and strong*, *Psal. xxiv. 8.* sometimes most mighty; sometimes Almighty; no less is meant in all than God's infinite almighty power.

For the second, To be strong in the mighty power, or power of the Lord's might, implies these two acts of faith:

First, A settled firm persuasion, that the Lord is almighty in power. *Be strong in the power of his might*; that is, be strongly rooted in your faith, concerning this one foundation truth, that God is almighty.

Secondly, It implies a further act of faith, not only to believe that God is almighty, but also that this almighty power of God is engaged for its defence; so as to bear up in the midst of all trials and temptations undauntedly, leaning on the arm of God Almighty, as if it were his own strength. For the Apostle's drift is to hinder us from leaning on our own strength, and to encourage the Christian to make use of God's almighty power, as freely as if it were his own, whenever assaulted by Satan in any way; as a man set upon by a thief, stirs up all the force and strength he hath in his whole body to defend himself, and annoy his adversary, so the Apostle bids the Christian *be strong in the Lord, and*  
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*in the power of his might*; that is, Soul! away to thy God, whose mighty power is all intended and devoted by God himself for thy succour and defence. Go strengthen and intrench thyself in it by a stedfast faith, as that which shall be laid out to the utmost for thy good. From whence these two notes I conceive, will draw out the fatness of the words.

1. That it should be the Christian's great care and endeavour, in all temptations and trials, to strengthen his faith in the almighty power of God.

2. The Christian's duty and care is not only to believe that God is almighty, but strongly by faith, to rest on this almighty power of God, as engaged for his help and succour, in all his trials and temptations.

Doct. First, It should be the Christian's great care, in all temptations and trials, to strengthen his faith in the almighty power of God. When God holds forth himself as an object of the soul's trust and confidence in any great strait or undertaking, commonly this attribute of his almighty power is presented in the promise, as the surest hold-fast for faith to lay hold on; as a father in a rugged way gives his child his arm to lay hold by, so doth God usually reach forth his almighty power for his saints to exercise their faith on. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose faith God tried above most of his saints, before or since; for not one of those great things which were promised to them did they live to see performed in their days; and how doth God make known himself to them for their support, but by displaying this attribute, *Exod. vi. 3. I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by the Name of God Almighty.* This was all they had to keep house with all their days; with which they lived comfortably, and died triumphantly, bequeathing the promise to their children, not doubting (because God Almighty had promised) of the performance. Thus *Isa. xxvi.* where great mercies are promised to Judah, and a song penned before hand, to be sung on the triumphant day of their salvation; yet because there was a sharp winter of captivity to come between the promise and the spring-time of the promise; therefore, to keep their faith alive in this space, the prophet calls them up to act their faith on God Almighty. *Ver. 4. Trust ye in the Lord Jehovah, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.* So when his saints are going into the furnace of persecution, what now doth he direct their

their faith to carry to prison, to stake with them, but his almighty power? 1 *Pet.* iv. 19. *Let them that suffer, commit the keeping of their souls to him, as to a faithful Creator.* Creator is a name of almighty power. We shall now give some reasons of the point.

Reas. 1. First, Because it is no easy work to make use of this truth (how plain and clear soever it now appears) in great plunges of temptation, that God is almighty; to vindicate this name of God from those evil reports, which Satan and carnal reason raise against it, requires a strong faith indeed. I confess this principle is a piece of natural divinity: That light which finds out a Deity, will evince, (if followed close) this God to be almighty; yet in a carnal heart, it is like a rusty sword, hardly drawn out of the scabbard, and so of little or no use. Such truths are so imprisoned in natural conscience, that they seldom get a fair hearing in the sinner's bosom, till God gives them a goal-delivery, and brings them out of their house of bondage, where they are shut up in unrighteousness, with a high hand of his convincing spirit. Then, and not till then, the soul will believe God is holy, merciful, almighty; nay, some of God's peculiar people, and not the meanest for grace amongst them, have had their faith for a time set in this slough, and much to do, to get over those difficulties and improbabilities, which sense and reason have objected, so as to rely on the almighty power of God. Moses himself is a star of the first magnitude for grace, yet see how his faith blinks and twinkles, till he wades out of the temptation: *Numb.* xi. 21. *The people amongst whom I am, are six hundred thousand, and thou hast said, I will give them flesh that they may eat a whole month; shall the flocks and herds be slain for them, to suffice them?* This holy man had lost the sight, for a time, of the almighty power of God; and now he is projecting how this should be done: As if he had said in plain terms, How can this be accomplished? for so God interprets his reasoning, *ver.* 23. *And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lord's hand waxed short?* So Mary, *John* xi. 32. *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* And her sister Martha, *v.* 39, *Lord by this time he stinketh.* Both were gracious women, yet both betrayed the weakness of their faith in the almighty power of Christ; one limiting to place; If thou hadst been here, he had not died; as if Christ could not have saved his life absent, as well as present;  
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sent his health to him, as well as brought it with him. The other to time, Now he stinketh; as if Christ had brought his physick too late, and the grave would not deliver up its prisoner at Christ's command. And hast thou such an high opinion of thyself Christian, that thy faith needs not thy utmost care and endeavour, for further establishment on the almighty power of God, when thou seest such as these dash their foot against this kind of temptation?

The second reason may be taken from the absolute necessity of this act of faith above others, to support the Christian in the hour of temptation. All the Christian's strength and comfort is fetched without doors, and he hath none to send on his errand but faith: This goes to heaven, and knocks God up; as he in the parable, his neighbour at midnight for bread: Therefore when faith fails, and the soul hath none to go to market for supplies, there must needs be a poor house kept in the mean time. Now faith is never quite laid up, till the soul denies, or at least questions the power of God. Indeed, when the Christian disputes the will of God, whispering within its own bosom, Will he pardon? Will he save? This may make faith go haltingly to the throne of grace, but not hinder the soul from seeking the face of God; even then, faith on the power of God, will bear it company thither: *If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*, Matth. viii. 2. If thou wilt, thou canst pardon, thou canst purge: But when the soul concludes he cannot pardon, cannot save, this shoots faith to the heart, so that the soul falls at the foot of Satan, not able more to resist. Now it grows listless to duty, indifferent whether it prays or not; as one that sees the well dry, breaks or throws away his pitcher.

Thirdly, Because God is very tender of this flower of his crown, this part of his name; indeed he cannot spell it right, and leave out this letter; for that is God's name, whereby he is known from all his creatures. Now man may be called wise, merciful, mighty: God only all-wise, all-merciful, all mighty; so when we leave out this syllable all, we nick-name God, and call him by his creature's name, which he will not answer to. Now the tenderness that God shews to this prerogative of his, appears in three particulars:

First, In the strict command he lays on his people, to give him the glory of his power, *Isa. viii. 12, 13. Fear ye not their fear, but sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself; that is,*

in this sad posture of your affairs, when your enemies associate, and you seem a lost people to the eye of reason, not able to contest with the united powers which beset you on every side: Now I charge you, sanctify me, in giving me the glory of my almighty power; believe that your God is able of himself without any other, to defend you, and destroy them.

Secondly, In his severity to his dearest children, when they stagger in their faith, and do not entirely (without reasoning and disputing the case) rely on his almighty power: Zacharias did but ask the Angel, How shall I know this, because I am an old man, and my wife stricken in years? Yet for betraying therein his unbelief, had a sign indeed given him, but such an one as did not only strengthen his faith, but severely punish his unbelief; for he was struck dumb upon the place. God loves his children should believe his word, not dispute his power; as Luther, expresses it *Deus amat curristas non quaristas*. That which gave accent to Abraham's faith, *Rom* vi. 21. was that he was *fully persuaded, that what God had promised, he was able to perform.*

Thirdly, In the way God takes of giving his choicest mercies and greatest salvations to his people, wherein he lays the scene of his providence so, that when he hath done, it may be said almighty power was here. And therefore God commonly puts down those means and second causes, which if they stood about his work, would blind and hinder the full prospect thereof in effecting the same, *2 Cor.* i. 9. *We received the sentence of death in ourselves, that we might not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead.* Christ stayed till Lazarus was dead, that he might draw the eyes of their faith more singly to look on his power, by raising his dead friend, rather than curing him, when sick, which would not have carried so full a conviction of almightiness with it. Yea, he suffers a contrary power many times to arise in that very juncture of time, when he intends the mercy to his people, that he may rear up the more magnificent pillar of remembrance to his own power, in the ruin of that which contests with him. Had God brought Israel out of Egypt in the time of those Kings which knew Joseph, most likely they might have had a friendly departure and an easy deliverance; but God reserves this for the reign of that proud Pharaoh, who shall cruelly oppress them, and venture  
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his



his kingdom, but he will satisfy his lust upon them. And why must this be the time? Because God would bring them forth with a stretched-out arm. The magnifying of his power was God's great design, *Exod. ix. 16. In very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, to shew in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout the earth.*

Fourthly, In the prevalency which an argument that is pressed from his almighty power hath with God. It was the last string Moses had to his bow, when he begged the life of Israel, *Numb. xiv. 16. The nations which have heard the fame of thee, will speak, saying, because the Lord was not able, &c. and ver. 17. Let the power of my Lord be great; and with this he hath their pardon thrown him.*

The application of this point follows.

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## CHAP. IV.

### *Of acting our Faith on the Almighty Power of God, as engaged for our help.*

Doct. **T**HAT it is the Saint's duty, and should be their care, not only to believe God Almighty; but also strongly to believe that this almighty power of God is theirs (that is, engaged for their defence and help) so as to make use of it in all straits and temptations.

### SECT. I.

First, I shall prove that the almighty power of God is engaged for the Christian's defence; with the grounds of it.

Secondly,

Secondly, Why the Christian should strongly act his faith on this.

First, The almighty power of God is engaged for the saints defence; God brought Israel out of Egypt with an high hand; but did he set them down on the other side the Red Sea, to find and force their way to Canaan, by their own policy or power? When he had opened the iron gate of their house of bondage, and brought them into the open fields, did he vanish as the Angel from Peter, when out of prison? No, as a man carries his son, so the Lord bare them in all the way they went, *Deut. i. 31.* This lively sets forth the Saints march to Heaven: God brings a soul out of spiritual Egypt by his converting grace; that is, in the day of his power, wherein he makes the soul willing to come out of Satan's clutches. Now when the Saint is upon his march, all the country riseth upon him. How shall this poor creature pass the pikes, and get safely by all his enemies borders? God himself infolds him in the arm of his everlasting strength. *We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, 1 Pet. i. 5.* The power of God is that *shoulder*, on which Christ carries his sheep home, rejoicing all the way he goes, *Luke xv. 5.* These everlasting arms of his strength are those Eagle's wings, upon which the Saints are both tenderly and securely conveyed to glory, *Exod. xix. 4.* There is a five-fold tie or engagement that lies upon God's power, to be the Saint's life-guard.

First, The near relation he hath to his Saints, they are his own dear children; every one takes care of his own; the silly hen, how doth she bustle and bestir herself to gather her brood under her wing when the kite appears? No care like that which nature teacheth. How much more will God, who is the Father of such dispositions in his creatures, stir up his whole strength to defend his children? *He said they are my people, so he became their Saviour, Isa. xxxiii. 8.* As if God had said, shall I sit still and with my hand in my bosom, while my own people are thus misused before my face? I cannot bear it. The Mother as she sits in her house, heard one shriek, and knowing the voice, cries out, O'tis my child, away she throws all, and runs to him. Thus God takes the alarm of his childrens cry, *I heard Ephraim bemoaning himself,* saith the Lord; his cry pierced his ear, and his ear affected his bowels, and his bowels called up his power to his rescue.

Secondly,

Secondly, The love he beareth to his Saints engageth his power. He that hath God's heart, cannot want his arm. Love in the creature commands all the other affections, sets all the power of the whole man on work; thus in God, love sets all his other attributes on work. When God once set his thoughts on doing good to lost man, then wisdom fell on projecting the way, Almighty power undertook to raise the fabrick according to Wisdom's model. All are ready to affect what God saith he likes. Now the believing soul is an object of God's choicest love, even the same with which he loves his Son, *John* xvii. 26.

First, God loves the believer as the birth of his everlasting counsel; when a soul believes, then God's eternal purpose and counsel concerning him (whom he chose in Christ before the foundation of the world, and with whom his thoughts so long pregnant) brings forth. And how must God needs love that creature, whom he carried so long in the womb of his eternal purpose? This goodly fabrick of Heaven and Earth had not been built, but as a stage whereon he would in time act what he declared in Heaven of old, concerning the saving of thee, and a few more his elect; and therefore according to the same rate of delight, with which God pleased and entertained himself in the thoughts of this before the world was, must he needs rejoice over the soul now believing with love and complacency inconceivable; and God having brought his counsel thus far toward its issue, surely will raise all the power he hath, rather than be disappointed of his glory, within a few steps of home; I mean, his whole design, in the believer's salvation; the Lord who hath chosen his Saints (as Christ prays for Joshua their representative) will rebuke Satan and all their enemies, *Zech.* iii.

Secondly, God loves his Saints as the purchase of his Son's blood, they cost him dear: and that which is so hardly got, shall not be easily lost. He that was willing to expend his Son's blood to gain them, will not deny his power to keep them.

Thirdly, God loves the Saints for their likeness to himself, so that if he loves himself, he cannot but love himself appearing in them; and as he loves himself in them, so he defends himself in defending them. What is it in a Saint that engageth Hell, but the image of God, without which the war would soon be at an end? It is the hatred the panner hath

hath to man that makes him fly at his picture; *for thy sake are we slain all the day long*: And if the the quarrel be God's, surely the Saint shall not go forth to war at his own cost.

Thirdly, The covenant engageth God's almighty power, *Gen. xvii. 1. I am the Almighty God, walk before me.* There is a league offensive and defensive between God and his Saints, he gives it under his hand, that he will put forth the whole power of his Godhead for them, *1 Chron. xvii. 24. The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel.* God doth not parcel himself out by retail, but gives his Saints leave to challenge whatever he hath as theirs; and let him; whoever he is, sit in God's throne, and take away his crown, that can fasten an untruth on the Holy One; as his name is, so is his nature, a God keeping covenant for ever. The promises stand as the mountains about Jerusalem, never to be removed; the weak as well as the strong Christian is within this line of communication. Were Saints to fight it out in open field by the strength of their own grace then the strong were most likely to stand, and the weak to fall in battle; but both castled in the covenant are alike safe.

Fourthly, the Saints dependance on God, and expectation from God in all their straits, oblige this power for their succour: Whither doth a gracious soul fly in any want or danger from sin, Satan, or his instruments, but to his God? As naturally as the coney to her burrough, *Psal. lvii. 3. At what time I am afraid, saith David, I will trust in thee,* He tells God he will make bold with his house to step into, when taken in any storm; and doth not question his welcome. Thus when Saul hunted him, he left a city of gates and bars to trust God in the open field. Indeed all the Saints are taught the same lesson, to renounce their own strength, and rely on the power of God; their own policy, and cast themselves on the wisdom of God; their own righteousness, and expect all from the pure mercy of God in Christ; which act of faith is so pleasing to God, that such a soul should never be ashamed, *Psal. ix. 18. The expectation of the poor shall not perish.* A Heathen could say, when a bird (pursued by a hawk) flew into his bosom, I will not betray thee unto thy enemy, seeing thou comest for sanctuary unto me. How much less will God yield up a soul unto its enemy, when it takes

takes sanctuary in his name, saying, " Lord, I am hunted  
 " with such a temptation, dogged with such a lust, either  
 " thou must pardon it, or I am damned? mortify it, or I  
 " shall be a slave to it; take me into the bosom of thy love  
 " for Christ's sake; enclose me in the arms of thy everlasting  
 " strength; it is in thy power to save me from, or give me  
 " up into the hands of my enemy; I have no confidence in  
 " myself or any other; into thy hands I commit my cause,  
 " and rely on thee."

This dependance of a soul undoubtedly will awaken the almighty power of God for such a one's defence. He hath sworn the greatest oath that can come out of his blessed lips, even by himself, that such as fly for refuge to hope in him, shall have strong consolation, *Heb. vi. 17.* This indeed may give the Saint the greater boldness of faith to expect kind entertainment when he repairs to God for refuge, because he cannot come before he is looked for, God having set up his name and promises as a strong tower, both calls his people into these chambers, and expects they should betake themselves thither.

Fifthly, Christ's presence and employment in Heaven lays a strong engagement on God to bring his whole force and power into the field upon all occasions for his Saints defence; one special end of his journey to Heaven, and abode there, is, that he might, (as the Saints solicitor) be ever interceding for such supplies and succours of his Father, as their exigencies call for; and the more to assure us of the same before he went, he did (as it were) tell us, what heads he meant to go upon in his intercession, when he should come there; one of which was this, That his Father should keep his children, while they were to stay in the world, from the evil thereof, *John xvii. 15.* Neither doth Christ take upon him this work of his own head, but hath the same appointment of his Father, for what he now prays in Heaven, as he had for what he suffered on earth: he that ordained him a Priest to die for sinners, did not then strip him of his priestly garments (as Aaron); but appoints him to ascend in them to heaven, where he sits a Priest for ever by God's oath. And this office of intercession was erected purely in mercy to believers, that they might have full content given them for the performance of all that God hath promised; so that Jesus Christ is at court as our Ambassador

sador,<sup>e</sup> to see all carried fairly between God and us according to agreement; and if Christ follows his business close, and be faithful in his place to believers, all is well: and doth it not behove him to be so, who intercedes for such dear relations? Suppose a King's son should get out of a besieged city, where he had left his wife and children, whom he loves as his own soul, and these all ready to die by sword or famine, if supply come not soon; could this Prince, when arrived at his father's house, please himself with the delights of the court, and forget the distress of his family? Or rather, would he not come post to his father (having their cries or groans always in his ears) and before he eat or drink, do his errand to his father, and entreat him, if ever he loved him, that he would send all the force of his kingdom to raise the siege, rather than any of his dear relations should perish? Surely, Sirs, though Christ be in the top of his preferment, and out of the storm in regard of his own person, yet his children left behind, in the midst of sins, Satan, and the world's batteries, are in his heart, and shall not be forgotten a moment by him. The care he takes in our business, appeared in the speedy dispatch he made of his spirit to his Apostles supply, when he ascended, which as soon almost as he was warm in his seat, at his Father's right hand, he sent, to the unspeakable comfort of his Apostles, and we that do or shall believe on him.

## SECT. II.

The second branch of the point follows: That Saints should eye this power of God as engaged for them, and press it home upon their souls till they silence all doubts and fears about the matter; which is the importance of this exhortation: *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* Fortify and entrench your souls within the breast-work of this attribute of God's mighty power made over to you by God himself.

First, It is the end of all promises to be steadfast to our faith; so of those in particular, where his Almighty power is expressly engaged, that we may count this attribute our portion, and reap the comfort it yields as freely, as one may the crop of his own field. *Walk before me,* saith God to *Abraham, I am God Almighty;* set on this as thy-  
 tion,

tion and live upon it. The Apostle, *Heb. xiii. 6.* teacheth us what use to make of promises, ver. 5. *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,* there is the promise; and the inference which he teacheth us to draw by faith, from this, follows ver 6. *So we may boldly say, the Lord is our helper.* We, that is, every believer may boldly conclude God will help; not timorously, perhaps he will; but boldly assert it in the face of men and devils, because he that is almighty hath said it. Now for a Christian not to strengthen his faith on this incomparable sweet attribute, but to set down with a few weak unsettled hopes, when he ought to be strong in the faith of such promises; what is it but to undervalue the blessing of such promises? As if one should promise another house and land, and bid him make them sure to himself as the law can bind them, and he should take no care to effect this; would it not be interpreted as a slighting of his friend's kindness? Is it a small matter that God bindeth over his almighty power by promise to us, and bids us make it as sure to ourselves as we can by faith, and we neglect this, leaving the writings of the promises unsealed on our hearts?

Secondly, Our obedience and comfort are strong or weak, as our faith is on this principle.

First, Our obedience; that being a child of faith, partakes of its parent's strength or weakness; what an heroic act of obedience did Abraham perform in offering up his son? His faith being well set on the power of God, he carries that without staggering, which would have laid a weak faith on the ground. No act of faith more strengthens for duty, than that which eyes God's almighty power engaged for its assistance. *Go in this thy might,* said God to Gideon, *have not I called thee?* as if he had said, can I not, will I not carry thee through thy work? Away goes Gideon in the faith of this, and doth wonders. This brought the righteous man from the east to God's foot; though he knew not whither he went, yet he knew with whom he went, God Almighty. But take a soul not persuaded of this, how uneven and unstable is he in his obediential course? Every threat from man, if mighty, dismays him, because his faith is not fixed on the Almighty; and therefore sometimes he will shift off a duty, to comply with man, and betray his trust into the hands of a creature, because he hath fleshly eyes to behold the power of man, but wants a spiritual eye to see God at his back, to protect

him with his almighty power: which, were his eyes open to see, he would not be so routed in his thoughts at the approach of a weak creature: *Should such a man us I flee?* saith good Nehemiah, *Neh. vi. 11.* He was newly come from the throne of grace, where he had called in the help of the Almighty, ver. 9. *O God, strengthen my hands.* And truly now he will rather die upon the place than disparage his God with a dishonourable retreat.

Secondly, The Christian's comfort increaseth or declines, as the aspect of his faith is to the power of God. Let the soul question that, or his interest in it, and his joy gusheth out, even as blood out of a broken vein: It is true, a soul may scramble to Heaven with much ado, by a faith of recumbency, relying on God as able to save, without this persuasion of its interest in God: but such a soul goes with a scant side wind, or like a ship, whose masts are laid by the board exposed to wind and weather, if others better appointed did not tow it along with them. Many fears like waves ever cover such a soul, that it is more under water than above; whereas one that sees itself folded in the arms of Almighty Power, O how such a soul goes mounting before the wind, with his sails filled with joy and peace! Let afflictions come, storms arise, this blessed soul knows where it shall land and be welcome. The name of God is his harbour, where he puts in as boldly as a man steps into his own house, when taken in a shower. He hears God calling him into this and other his attributes, as chambers taken up for him. *Isa. vi. 20* *Come my people and enter into thy chambers* God calls them his, and it were foolish modesty not to own what God gives, *Isa. xlv. 24.* *Surely shall a man say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength,* that is, I have righteousness in God's righteousness, strength in his strength, so that in this respect Christ can no more say that his strength is his own, and not the believer's, than the husband can say, my body is my own, and not my wife's. A soul persuaded of this may sing cheerfully with the sharpest thorn at his breast; so David, *Psal. lvii. 7.* *My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed, I will sing and praise.* What makes him so merry in so sad a place as the cave where he now was? He will tell in ver. 1. Where you have him nestling himself under the shadow of God's wings, and now well may he sing care and fear away, A soul thus provided, may lie at ease on a hard bed. Do you not think they sleep as soundly who dwell on  
London



London-Bridge, as they who live at Whitehall or Chéapside, knowing the waves that roll under them cannot hurt them? Even so may the saints rest quietly over the floods of death itself, and fear no ill.

### SECT. III.

Is the Almighty Power of God engaged for the Saints defence? Surely the Saints enemies will have a hard pull, who meddle with them that are so far above their match. The Devil was so cunning, that he would have Job out of his trench, his hedge down, before he would fall on; but so desperate are men, they will try the field with the Saints, though incircled with the Almighty Power of God. What folly were it to attempt, or sit down before such a City, which cannot be blocked up so as no relief can get in? The way to Heaven cannot. In the Church's straitest siege, there is a river which shall make glad this City of God, with seasonable succours from Heaven. The Saints fresh springs are all from God; and it is as feasible for man to stop the water courses of the clouds, as to dam up those streams, which invincibly glide like veins of water in the earth, from the fountain-head of his mercy, into the bosom of his people; The Egyptians thought they had Israel in a trap, when they saw them march into such a nook by the sea-side; they are entangled, they are entangled; and truly so they had been irrecoverably, had not that Almighty Power which led them on, engaged to bring them off with honour and safety; well, when they are out of this danger, behold, they are in a wilderness, where nothing is to be had for back or belly, and yet here they shall live forty years, without trade or tillage, without begging or robbing any of the neighbouring nations, they shall not be beholden to them for a penny in their way; What cannot Almighty Power do to provide for his people? What can it not do to protect them against the power and wrath of their enemies? Almighty Power stood between them and the Egyptians; so that (poor creatures) they could not so much as come to see their enemy: God sets up a dark cloud as a blind before their eyes; and all the while his eye through the cloud is looking them into disorder and confusion. And is the Almighty now grown weaker, or his enemies

stronger, that they promise themselves better success? No, neither; but men are blinder than the saints enemies of old, who sometimes have fled at the appearance of God among his people, crying out, Let us flee, for the Lord fighteth for them. Whereas there be many now a-days, will rather give the honour of their discomfitures to Satan himself, than acknowledge God in the business; more ready to say the Devil fought against them, than God. O you that have not yet worn off the impressions which the Almighty Power of God hath at any time made upon your spirits; beware of having any thing to do with this generation of men, whoever they are. Come not near their tabernacle, cast not thy lot in amongst them, who are enemies to the Saints of the Most High; for they are men devoted to destruction. God so loves his Saints that he makes nothing of giving whole nations for their ransom. He ripped open the very womb of Egypt, to save the life of Israel his child, *Isa.* xliii. 3.

Use 2. This shews the dismal, and deplorable condition of all you, who are yet in a Christless state; you have seen a rich mine opened, but not a penny of this treasure comes to your share; truth laden with incomparable comfort, but it is bound for another coast; it belongs to the Saints, into whose bosom this truth unlades all her comfort: See God shutting the door upon you, when he sets his children to feast themselves with such dainties, *Isa.* lxxv. 13. *My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty.* God hath his set number, which he provides for; he knows how many he hath in his family; these and no more shall sit down. One chief dish at the Saint's board, is the Almighty power of God; this was set before Abraham, and stands before all his Saints, that they may eat to fulness of comfort on it: *But thou shalt be hungry.* He is Almighty to pardon; but he will not use it for thee an impenitent sinner; thou hast not a friend on the bench, not an attribute in all God's name will speak for thee: Mercy itself will sit and vote with the rest of its fellow attributes for thy damnation. God is able to save and help in a time of need; but upon what acquaintance is it that thou art so bold with God, as to expect his saving arm to be stretched forth for thee? Though a man will rise at midnight to let in a child that cries and knocks at his door, yet he will not take so much pains for a dog, that lies howling there. This presents thy  
condition

condition, sinner, sad enough, yet this is to tell thy story fairest; for that Almighty Power of God which is engaged for the believer's salvation, is as deeply obliged to bring thee to thy execution and damnation. What greater tie than an oath? God himself is under an oath to be the destruction of every impenitent soul. That oath which Godsware in his wrath against the unbelieving Israelites, that they should not enter into his rest, concerns every unbeliever to the end of the world. In the name of God consider, were it but the oath of a man, or a company of men, that like those in the Acts, should swear to be the death of such an one, and thou wert the man, would it not fill thee with fear and trembling night and day, and take away the quiet of thy life, till they were made friends? What then are their pillows stuffed with, who can sleep so soundly without any horror or amazement, though they be told, that Almighty God is under an oath of damning them body and soul, without timely repentance? O bethink yourselves sinners, is it wisdom, or valour, to refuse terms of mercy from God's hands, whose Almighty Power, if rejected, will soon bring you into the hands of justice? And how fearful a thing it is, to fall into the hands of Almighty God, no tongue can express; no not they who feel the weight of it.

Use 3. This speaks to you that are Saints indeed, be strong in the faith of this truth, make it an article of your creed; with the same faith that you believe there is a God, believe also this God's Almighty Power is thy sure friend, and then improve it to thy best advantage. As

First, In agonies of conscience that arise from the greatness of thy sins, fly for refuge to the Almighty Power of God. Truly, sirs, when a man's sins are displayed in all their bloody colours, and spread forth in their killing aggravations, and the eye of conscience awakened to behold them through the magnifying glass of temptation, they must needs surprise the creature with horror and amazement, till the soul can say with the Prophet, for all this huge host, *There is yet more with me than against me.* One Almighty is more than many mighties. All these mighty sins and devils make not any almighty sin, or an almighty Devil. Oppose to all the hideous charges brought against thee by them, this only attribute, as the French Ambassador once silenced the Spaniard's pride in repeating his master's many titles, with one that drowned them all.—God himself, *Hos. xi. 9.* when he had aggravated his  
peoples,

people's sins to the height, then to shew what a God can do, breaks out into a sweet promise; *I will not execute the fierceness of my anger*, and why not? *I am God and not man*. I will shew the almightiness of my mercy. Something like our usual phrase, when a child or a woman strikes us, I am a man, and not a child, or woman, therefore I will not strike again. The very considering God to be God, supposeth him to be almighty to pardon, as well as to avenge, and this is some relief; but then to consider it is almighty power in covenant to pardon, this is more: As none can bind God but himself, so none can break the bond himself makes; and are they not his own words, that *he will abundantly pardon?* Isa. lvi. He will multiply to pardon; as if he had said, I will drop mercy with your sin, and spend all I have, rather than let it be said my good is overcome of your evil. It fares with the gracious soul in this case, as with a Captain that yields his castle upon gracious terms of having his life spared, and he safely conveyed to his house, there to be settled peaceably in his estate and possession, for all which he hath the General's hand and seal, on which he marcheth forth, but the rude soldiers assault him, and put him in fear of his life, he appeals to the General (whose honour now is engaged for him) and is presently relieved, and his enemies punished. Thou mayest, poor soul, when accused by Satan, molested by his terrors, say, it is God that justifies; I have his hand to it, that I should have my life given me as soon as I laid down my arms and submitted to him, which I desire to do; behold, the gates of my heart are open to let the Prince of Peace in, and is not the Almighty able to perform his promise? I commit myself to him as unto a faithful Creator.

Secondly, Improve this Almighty Power of God, and thy interest therein, in temptations to sin, when thou art overpowered, and fleest before the face of thy strong corruption, or fearest thou shalt one day fall by it, make bold to take hold of this attribute, and reinforce thyself from it again to resist and in resisting, to believe a timely victory over it. The Almighty God stands in sight of thee while thou art in the valley fighting, and stays but for a call from thee when distressed in battle, and then he will come to thy rescue: Jehosaphat cried, when in the throng of his enemies, and the Lord helped him; much more mayest thou promise thyself

thyself his succour in thy soul-combats: Betake thyself to the throne of grace with that promise, *Sin shall not have dominion over you*; and before you urge it, (the more to help thy faith) comfort thyself with this, that though the word Almighty is not expressed, yet it is implied in this and every promise, and thou mayest without adding a tittle to the word of God, read it in thy soul; sin shall not have dominion over you, saith the Almighty God; for this and all his attributes are the constant seal to all his promises. Now soul, put the bond in suit, fear not the recovery, 'tis debt, and so due: He is able whom thou suest, and so there is no fear of losing the charge of the suit: and he that was so gracious to bind himself when he was free, will be so faithful (being able) to perform now he is bound; only while thou expectest the performance of the promise, and the assistance of this Almighty Power against thy corruptions, take heed that thou keep under the shadow of this attribute, and condition of this promise, *Psal. xci. 1*. The shadow will not cool except in it; what good to have the shadow, though of a mighty rock, when we sit in the open sun: To have Almighty Power engaged for us, and we to throw ourselves out of the protection thereof by bold sallies into the mouth of temptation? The Saints falls have been, when they run out of their trench and hold; for like the conies, they are a weak people in themselves, and their strength lies in the rock of God's Almightyness, which is their habitation.

Thirdly, Christian improve this, when oppressed with the weight of any duty and service, which in thy place and calling lies upon thee. Perhaps thou findest the duty of thy calling too heavy for thy weak shoulders, make bold by faith to lay the heaviest end of thy burthen on God's shoulder, which is thine (if a believer) as sure as God can make it by promise. When at any time thou art sick of thy work, and ready to think with Jonas to run from it; encourage thyself with that of God to Gideon, whom he called from the flail to thresh the mountains. Go in this thy might, hath not God called thee; Fall to the work God sets thee about, and thou engagest his strength for thee. *The way of the Lord is strength*. Run from thy work, and thou engagest God's strength against thee, he will send some storm or other after thee to bring home his runaway servant. How oft hath the coward been killed in a ditch, or under some hedge, when the valiant soldier that stood his ground and kept his  
place

place, got off with safety and honour? Art thou called to suffer? Flinch not because thou art afraid thou shalt never be able to bear the cross: God can lay it so even, that thou shalt not feel it, though thou shouldst find no succour till thou comest to the prison door, yea, till thou hast one foot on the ladder, or thy neck on the block, despair not; *In the Mount will the Lord be seen.* And in that hour he can give thee such a view of his sweet face, as shall make the blood come in the ghastly face of a cruel death, and appear lovely in thy eyes for his sake. He can give thee so much comfort in hand, as thou shalt acknowledge God is afore-hand with thee, for all the shame and pain thou canst endure for him: And if it should not amount to this, yet so much as will bear all the charges thou canst be put to in the way, lies ready told in that promise, 1 Cor. x. 13. Thou shalt have it at sight, and this may satisfy a Christian, especially if he considers, though he does not carry so much of Heaven's joy about him to Heaven as others, yet he shall meet it as soon as he comes to his father's house, where it is reserved for him. In a word, Christian, rely upon thy God, and make thy daily applications to the throne of grace, for continual supplies of strength, you little think how kindly he takes it, that you will make use of him, the oftner the better, and the more you come for, the more welcome; else why would Christ have told his Disciples, *hitherto ye have asked nothing?* but to express his large heart in giving: loth to put his hand to his purse for a little, and therefore by a familiar kind of rhetorick induces them to rise higher in asking, as Naaman when Gehazi asked one talent, entreats him to take two: Such a bountiful heart thy God hath, while thou art asking a little peace and joy, he bids thee open thy mouth wide, and he'll fill it. Go and ransack thy heart, Christian, from one end to the other, find out thy wants, acquaint thyself with all thy weakness, and set them before the Almighty, as the Widow her empty vessel before the Prophet, hadst thou more than thou canst bring, thou mayest have them all filled. God hath strength enough to give, but he hath no strength to deny, here the Almighty himself (with reverence be it spoken) is weak; even a child the weakest in grace of his family, that can but say father, is able to overcome him; and therefore let not the weakness of thy faith discourage thee. No greater motive to the bow-  
els

els of mercy to stir up Almighty Power to relieve thee, than thy weakness, when pleaded in the sense of it. The pale face and thin cheeks (I hope) move more with us, than the canting language of a stout sturdy beggar. Thus the soul, that comes laden in the sense of his weak faith, love, patience, the very weakness of them carries an argument along with them for succour.

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## CHAP. V.

*Wherein is answered a Grand Objection, that some disconsolate Souls may raise against the former Discourse.*

Object. **O** But, saith some disconsolate Christian, I have prayed again and again for strength against such a corruption, and to this day my hands are weak, and these sons of Zeruah are so strong, that I am ready to say, all the preachers do but flatter me, that do pour their oil of comfort upon my head, and tell me that I shall at last conquer these mine enemies, and see that joyful day where with David, I shall *sing to the Lord, for delivering me out of the hands of all mine enemies*. I have prayed for strength for such a duty, and to come off, as weakly and deadheartedly as before. If God be with me by his mighty power to help me, why is all this befallen me?

Answer. First, look once again, poor hears, into thine own bosom, and see whether thou findest not some strength sent into thee, which thou didst over-look before; this may be very often when God answers our prayer not in the letter, or when the thing itself is sent, but it comes in at the back door, while we are expecting it at the front: and truly thus the friend thou art looking for, may be in thine house, and thou not know it. Is not this thy case, poor soul? Thou hast been praying for strength against such a lust, and now thou wouldest have God presently put forth his power

to knock it on the head, and lay it for dead, that it shall never more stir in thy bosom: Is not this the door thou hast stood looking for God to come in at, and no sight or news of him coming that way? Thy corruption yet stirs, it may be more troublesome than before; now thou askest, where is the strength promised to thy relief? Let me entreat thee before thou layest down that sad conclusion against thy God and self, to see whether he hath not conveyed in some strength by another door: Perhaps thou hast not strength to conquer it so soon as thou desirest, but hath he not given further praying strength against it? Thou prayedst before, but now more earnestly; all the powers of thy soul are up to plead with God. Before thou wast more favourable and moderate in thy request, now thou hast a zeal, thou canst take no denial; yea, welcome any thing in the room of thy corruption: would God but take thy sin and send a cross thou wouldest bless him: now, poor soul, is this, nothing? Had not thy God reinforced thee, thy sin would have weakened the spirit of thy prayer, and not increase it; David began to recover himself, when he began to recover his spirit in prayer. The stronger the cry, the stronger the child, I warrant you Jacob wrestled, and this is called his strength, *Hos.* xii. It appeared, there was much of God in him that he could take such hold of the Almighty, as to keep it, though God seemed to shake him off: If thus thou art enabled, soul, to deal with the God of Heaven, no fear but thou shalt be much more able to deal with sin and Satan. If God hath given thee so much strength, to wrestle with him above and against denials, thou hast prevailed with the stronger of the two: Overcome God, and he will overcome all for thee. Again, perhaps thou hast been praying for further strength to be communicated to thee in duty, that thou mightest be more spiritual, vigorous, united, and sincere, and the like therein, and yet thou findest thy old distempers hanging about thee, as if thou hadst never acquainted God with them. Well soul, look once again into thy bosom with an unprejudiced eye, though thou dost not find the strength thou prayest for, yet hast thou no more self-abasing strength? Perhaps the annoyance thou hast from these remaining distempers in duty, occasion thee to have a meaner opinion of all thy duties than ever, yea, they make thee abhor thyself in the sense of these, as if thou hadst so many loathsome vermin  
about



about thee. Job's condition on the dunghill, with all his blotches and running sores on his body, appears desirable to thee in comparison of thine, whose soul thou complainest is worse than his body. O this afflicts thy soul deeply, doth it not? That thou shouldest appear before the Lord with such a dead, divided heart, and do his work worst, that deserves best at thy hands, and is all this nothing? Surely, Christian, thine eyes are held as much as Hagar's, or else thou wouldest see the streamings forth of divine grace in this frame of thy heart; surely others will think God hath done a mighty work in thy soul; what is more difficult than to bring our proud hearts to take shame for that whereof they naturally boast and glory? and is it nothing for thee to tread on the very neck of thy duties, and count them matter of thy humiliation and abasing, which others make the matter of their confidence and self-rejoicing? Good store of virtue hath gone from Christ, to dry this issue of pride in thy heart, which sometimes in gracious ones runs through their duties that it is seen, may be, by those that have less grace than themselves.

Secondly, Christian, candidly interpret God's dealings with thee. Suppose it be as thou sayest, thou hast pleaded the promise, and waited on the means, and yet findest no strength from all these receipts, either in thy grace or comfort, now take heed of charging God foolishly, as if God were not what he promised, this were to give that to Satan, which he is all this while gaping for. It is more becoming the dutiful disposition of a child, when he hath not presently what he writes for to his father, to say, My father is wiser than I, his wisdom will prompt him, what and when to send to me, and his fatherly affections to me his child, will neither suffer him to deny any thing that is good, or slip the time that is seasonable. Christian, thy Heavenly Father hath gracious ends that holds his hands at present, or else thou hadst before this heard from him.

First, God may deny further degrees of strength to put thee on the exercise of that thou hast more carefully. As a Mother doth by her child, that is learning to go, she sets it down, and stands some distance from it, and bids it come to her; the child feels its legs weak, and cries for the mother's help, but the mother steps back on purpose, that the child should put forth all its little strength in making after her.



“ unbelief, questioning the truth of the one, and the return  
 “ of the other ; and hath God notwithstanding all my infir-  
 “ mities fulfilled my desire, and performed his promise ?  
 “ O what shall I render unto the Lord ? ” Thus David reads  
 God’s mercy through the spectacles of his own weakness,  
 and infirmity, and it appears great ; whereas if a mercy  
 should come in, as an answer to a duty managed with such  
 strength of faith, and height of other graces, as might free  
 him and his duty from usual infirmities, it might prove a  
 snare, and occasion some self-applauding, rather than merc-  
 cy-admiring thoughts in the creature.

Thirdly, God may communicate the less of his assisting  
 strength, that he may shew the more of his supporting  
 strength, in upholding weak grace : We do not wonder to  
 see a man of strong constitution, that eats his bread heart-  
 ily, and sleeps soundly, live : But for a crazy body, full  
 of ails and infirmities, to be so patched up by the physicians  
 art, that he stands to old age, this begets some wonder in  
 the beholders. It may be thou art a poor trembling soul,  
 thy faith is weak, and thy assaults from Satan strong, thy  
 corruptions stirring and active, and thy mortifying strength  
 little, so that in thy opinion they rather gain ground on thy  
 grace, than give ground to it, ever and anon thou art ready  
 to think, thou shalt be cast as a wreck on the Devil’s shore :  
 And yet to this day thy grace lives, though full of leaks ;  
 now is it not worth the stepping aside to see this strange  
 sight ? A broken ship with masts and hull rent and torn,  
 thus towed along by Almighty Power, thro’ an angry sea,  
 and armadas of sins and Devils, safely into his harbour.  
 To see a rush candle in the face of the boisterous wind, not  
 blown out ; in a word, to see a weak stripling in grace held  
 up in God’s arms till he defeats the Devil : This God is  
 doing in upholding thee : Thou art one of those babes, out  
 of whose mouth God is perfecting his praise, by ordaining  
 such strength for thee, that thou a babe in grace, shall yet  
 foil a giant in wrath and power.

Thirdly, If after long waiting for strength from God, it be  
 as thou complainest, enquire whether that which hinders be  
 not found in thyself. The head is the seat of animal spi-  
 rits, yet there may be such obstructions in the body, as  
 the other members may for a time be deprived of them ;  
 till

46      AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT,

till the passage be free between Christ thy head and thee, thy strength will not come, and therefore be willing to enquire.

First, Hast thou come indeed to God for strength to perform duty, to mortify corruption and the like? Perhaps thou wilt say, Yes, I have waited on those ordinances, which are the way in which he hath promised to give out strength. But is this all? Thou mayest come to them, and not wait on God in them. Hast thou not carnally expected strength from them, and so put the ordinance in God's stead? Hath not the frame of thy spirit some affinity with theirs in *James iv. 13.* *We will go into such a city, and buy, and sell, and get gain?* Hath not thy heart said, I will go and hear such a man, and get comfort, get strength? and dost thou wonder that thou art weak, barren, and unfruitful? Are ordinances God, that they should make you strong or comfortable? Thou mayest hear them answer thee, poor soul, as the King to the woman in the siege of Samaria: Help, O prayer, or O minister, sayest thou; how can they help, except the Lord help? These are but Christ's servants: Christ keeps the key of his wine cellar, they cannot so much as make you drink, when you come to your masters houses, and therefore, poor soul, stay not short of Christ, but press through all the croud of ordinances, and ask to speak with Jesus, to see Jesus, and touch him, and virtue will come forth.

Secondly, Ask thy soul whether thou hast been thankful for that little strength thou hast, though thou art not of that strength in grace, to run with the foremost, and hold pace with the tallest of thy brethren, yet art thou thankful that thou hast any strength at all? though it be but to cry after them, whom thou seest out-strip thee in grace, this is worth thy thanks. All in David's army attained not to be equal with his few worthies in prowess and honour, and yet he did not cashier them: Thou hast reason to be thankful for the meanest place in the army of Saints, the least communications of gospel-mercy, and grace must not be overlooked. As soon as Moses with his army was through the sea, they strike up before they stir from the bank-side, and acknowledge the wonderful appearance of God's power and mercy for them, though this was but one step in their way; a howling wilderness presented itself to them, and they not able to subsist a few days with all their provision, for, all their

their great victory, yet Moses will praise God for this handful of mercy. This holy man knew the only way to keep credit with God, so as to have more, was to pay down his praise for what was received. If thou would have fuller communications of divine strength, own God in what he hath done. Art thou weak? Bless God thou hast life.—Dost thou through feebleness often fail in duty, and fall into temptation? mourn in the sense of these; yet bless God, that thou dost not live in a total neglect of duty, out of a prophane contempt thereof, and that instead of falling through weakness, thou dost not lie in the mire of sin through the wickedness of thy heart. The unthankful soul may thank itself, it thrives no better.

Thirdly, Art thou humble under the assistance and strength God hath given thee? Pride stops the conduit; if the heart begins to swell, it is time for God to hold his hand, and turn the Cock; for all that is poured on such a soul, runs over into self-applause, and so is as water spilt in regard of any good it doth the creature, or any glory it brings to God. A proud heart and a lofty mountain are always barren.—Now beside the common ways that pride discovers itself, as by under-valuing others, and over-valuing itself and such like, you shall observe two other symptoms of it.—First, it appears in bold adventures, when a person runs into the mouth of temptation, bearing himself on the confidence of his grace received. This was Peter's sin, by which he was drawn to engage further than became an humble faith, running into the Devil's quarters, and so became his prisoner for a while. The good man, when in his right temper, had thoughts low enough of himself; as when he asked his master, *Is it I?* But he that feared at one time, lest he might be the traitor, at another cannot think so ill of himself, as to suspect he should be the denier of his master. What he? No, though all the rest forsake him, yet he would stand to his colours. Is this thy case, Christian? Possibly God hath given thee much of his mind, thou art skilful in the word of life, and therefore thou darest venture to breath in corrupt air, as if only the weak spirits of less knowing Christians, exposed them to be infected with the contagion of error and heresy. Thou hast a large portion of grace, or at least thou thinkest so, and venturdest to go where an humble-minded Christian would fear his heels should

should slip under him. Truly now thou temptest God to suffer thy locks to be cut, when thou art so bold to lay thy head in the lap of a temptation. Secondly, Pride appears in the neglect of those means, whereby the Saints' graces and comforts are to be fed when strongest. May be, Christian, when thou art under fears and doubts, then God hath thy company, thou art oft with thy pitcher at his door; but when thou hast got any measure of peace, there goes presently some strangeness between God and thee: Thy pitcher walks not as it was wont to these wells of salvation. No wonder if thou (tho' rich in grace and comfort) goest behind-hand, seeing thou spendest on the old stock, and drive no trade at present to bring in more: or if thou dost not thus neglect duty, yet may be thou dost not perform it with that humility which formerly beautified the same: Then thou prayedst in the sense of thy weakness to get strength, now thou prayest to shew thy strength, that others may admire thee. And if once (like Hezekiah) we call in spectators to see our treasure, and applaud us for our gifts and comfort, then it is high time for God, if he indeed love us, to send some messengers to carry these away from us, which carry our hearts from him.

Fourthly, If thy heart doth not smite thee from what hath been said, but thou hast sincerely waited on God, and yet hast not received the strength thou desirest, yet let it be thy resolution to live and die waiting on him. God doth not tell us his time of coming, and it were boldness to set one of our own heads. Go, saith Christ to his Disciples, *Luke xxiv. 49. Stay ye in Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.* Thus he saith to thee; stay at Jerusalem, wait on him in the means he hath appointed, till thou art endued with further power to mortify thy corruptions, &c. And for thy comfort know,

First, Thy thus persevering to wait on God, will be an evidence of strong grace in thee: the less encouragement thou hast to duty, the more thy faith to bear thee up in duty. He that can trade when times are so dead, that all his ware lies upon his hand, and yet draws not in his hand, but rather trades more and more, sure his stock is great. What, no comfort in hearing, no ease to thy spirit in praying, and yet more greedy to hear, and more frequent in prayer? O soul, great is thy faith and patience.

2. Assure

PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD. 49

2. Assure thyself when thou art at the greatest pinch, strength shall come : *They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength*: when the last handful of meal was dressing, then is the Prophet sent to keep the widow's house. When temptation is strong, thy little strength even spent, and thou ready to yield into the hands of thine enemies, then expect succours from Heaven to enable thee to hold out under the temptation. Thus to Paul, *my grace is sufficient*, to raise the siege, and drive away the tempter; thus to Job, when Satan had him at an advantage, then God takes him off. Like a wise moderator, who, when the respondent is hard put to it by a subtle opponent, takes him off, when he would else run him down, *James v. 11. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*

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EPHES. vi. 11.

*Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil.*

THIS verse is a key to the former, wherein the Apostle had exhorted believers to encourage, and bear up their spirits on the Lord, and the Power of his might. Now in these words he explains himself, and shews how he would have them do this, not presumptuously come into the field without that armour, which God hath appointed to be worn by all his soldiers, and yet with a bravado to trust in the power of God to save them. That soul is sure to fall short of Heaven, who hath nothing but a carnal confidence on the name of God, blown up by the ignorance of God and himself; No, he that would have his confidence duly placed on the power of God, must conscientiously use the means appointed for his defence, and not rush naked into the

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the battle, like that phanatic spirit at Munster, who would needs go forth, and chase away the whole army, then besieging that city, with no other cannon, than a few words charged with the name of the Lord of hosts (which he blasphemously made bold to use) saying, *In the name of the Lord of Hosts depart.* But himself soon perished, to learn others wisdom by what he paid for his folly. What foolish braving language shall you hear drop from the lips of the most prophane and ignorant among us? They trust in God, hope in his mercy, defy the Devil and all his works, and such like stuff, who yet are poor naked creatures without the least piece of God's armour upon their souls. To cashier such presumption from the Saints camp, he annexed this directory to his exhortation, *put on the whole armour of God,* &c. So that the words fall into these two general parts.

First, A direction annexed to the former exhortation, shewing how we may in a regular way come to be strong in in the Lord, that is, by putting on the whole armour of God.

Second, A reason or argument strengthening this direction, *that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.* In the direction observe,

First, The furniture he directs, and that is *Armour.*

Secondly, The kind or quality of this armour, *Armour of God.*

Thirdly, The quantity or entireness of the armour; the whole armour of God.

Fourthly, The use of this armour; put on the whole armour of God.

To begin with the first, The furniture which every one must have that would fight Christ's battles. The question here will be, What is this armour?

First, By armour is meant Christ; we read of putting on the Lord Jesus, *Rom. xiii. 14.* Where Christ is set forth under the notion of armour. The Apostle doth not exhort them for rioting and drunkenness, to put on sobriety and temperance; for chambering and wantonness, put on chastity; as the Philosopher would have done; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ; implying thus much, till Christ be put on, the creature is unarmed. It is not a man's morality and philosophical virtues, that will repel a temptation, sent with a full charge from Satan's cannon. Again, the graces of  
Christ



Christ ; these are armour, as the girdle of truth, the breast-plate of righteousness, and the rest. Hence we are bid also to *put on the new man*, Eph. iv. 24. Which is made up of all the several graces, as its parts and members. Not excluding those duties and means which God hath appointed the Christian to use for defence.

The phrase thus opened ; the point is,

## CHAP. I.

*Shewing the Christless and Graceless Soul, to be the Soul without armour, and therein his Misery.*

Observ. **T**HAT a person in a christless, graceless state, is naked and unarmed, and so unfit to fight Christ's battles against sin and Satan. Or thus, a soul out of Christ is naked and destitute of all armour to defend them against sin and Satan. God at first sent man forth in compleat armour, *being created in righteousness and true holiness* ; but by a wile the Devil stripped him, and therefore as soon as the first sin was compleated, it is written, Gen. iii. 7. *They were naked*, that is, poor weak creatures, at the will of Satan, a subdued people, disarmed by their proud conqueror, and unable to make head against him. Indeed it cost Satan some dispute to make the first breach, but after he had once the gates opened to let him in as conqueror into the heart of man, he plays Rex : Behold a troop of other sins croud in after him, without any stroke or strife ; instead of confessing their sins, they run their head in a bush, and by their good will would not come where God is, and when they cannot flee from him, how do they prevaricate before him ? They complain one of another, shifting the sin, rather than suing for mercy. So quickly were their hearts hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. And this is the woeful condition of every son and daughter of Adam, naked he finds us, and slaves he makes us, till God by his effectual call delivers us from the power of Satan into the kingdom of his dear Son : which will further appear, if we consider this Christless state in a four fold notion,

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1. It is a state of alienation from God, *Ye were without Christ, being aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, Eph. ii. 12.* Such an one hath no more to do with any covenant-promise, than he that lives at Rome has to do with the charter of London, which is the birth-right of its own denizens only. He is without God in the world, whereas God hath his hedge of special providence about his saints; and the Devil, though his spite be most at them, dares not come upon God's ground to touch them, without particular leave. Now what a deplorable condition is that, wherein a soul is left to the wide world, in the midst of legions of lusts and devils, to be rent and torn like a silly hare among a pack of hounds, and no God to call them off? Let God leave a people, though never so warlike, presently they lose their wits, and cannot find their hands: a company of children or wounded men may rise up and chase them out of their fenced cities, because God is not with them; which made Caleb and Joshua pacify the mutinous Israelites at the tidings of giants and walled cities, with this; *they are bread for us, their defence is departed from them.* How much more must that soul be as bread to Satan, that hath no defence from the Almighty? Take men of the greatest natural parts or acquired accomplishments, who want union with Christ, and renewing grace from Christ; O what fools doth the Devil make of them, leading them at his pleasure, some to one lust, and some to another; the proudest of them all is slave to one or other, though it be to the ruining of body and soul for ever. Where lies the mystery, that men of such parts and wisdom should debase themselves to such drudgery work of Hell? even here, they are in a state of alienation from God, and no more able of themselves to break the Devil's yoke, than a slave to run from his chain.

Secondly, The Christless state is a state of ignorance, and such must needs be naked and unarmed. He that cannot see his enemy, how can he ward off the blow he sends? One seeing Prophet leads a whole army of blind men whither he pleaseth. The imperfect knowledge Saints have here, is Satan's advantage against them; he often takes them on the blind side: how easily then may he, with a parcel of good words, carry the blind soul out of his way, who knows not a step of the right? Now that the Christless state is a state of ignorance, see *Eph. v. 8. ye were sometimes*  
*darkness,*

*darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.* Ye were darkness, not in the dark; so one that hath an eye may be. A child of light is often in the dark concerning some truth or promise, but hath a spiritual eye, which the Christless person wants, and so is darkness. And this darkness cannot be enlightened, but by its union with Christ, which is expressed in the following phrase, *But now are ye light in the Lord.* As the eye of the body once put out, can never be restored by the creature's art, so neither can the spiritual eye, lost by Adam's sin, be restored by the teaching of men and angels. It is one of the diseases which Christ came to cure, *Luke iv. 18.* 'Tis true, there is a light of reason, which is imparted to every man by nature; but this light is darkness, compared with the Saints. As the night is dark to the day, even when the moon is in its full glory. This night-light of reason may save a person from some ditch, or pond, great and broad sins, but it will never help him to escape the more secret corruptions, which the Saints see like atoms, by the beams of spiritual knowledge. There is such curious work the creature has to do, as cannot be wrought by candle-light of natural knowledge. Nay more, where the common illumination of the spirit is super-added to this light of nature; yet that is darkness compared with the sanctifying knowledge of a renewed soul, which doth both discover spiritual truths, and warm the heart at the same time with the love of truth, having, like the sun, a prolific and quickening virtue, which the other wants; so that the heart lies under such common illuminations cold and dead. He hath no more strength to resist Satan, than if he knew not the command; whereas the Christian knowledge, even when taken prisoner by a temptation, pursues and brings back the soul, as Abraham, his nephew, out of the enemy's hands. Which hints,

Thirdly, The Christless state is a state of impotency, *Rom. v. When we were without strength, Christ came to die for the ungodly.* What can a disarmed people, not having sword or gun, do to shake off the yoke of a conquering enemy? Such a power hath Satan over the soul, *Luke xi. 21.* He is called the strong man that keeps the soul as his palace: if he hath no disturbance from Heaven he need fear no mutiny within; he keeps all in peace there. What the spirit of God doth in a saint; that in a manner doth Satan in a sinner. The spirit fills the heart of his with  
love,

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love, joy, holy desires, fears: so Satan fills the sinners heart with pride, lust, lying: *Why hath Satan filled thy heart?* saith Peter. And thus filled with Satan, (as the drundard with wine) he is not his own man, but Satan's slave.

Fourthly, The state of unregeneracy is a state of friendship with sin and Satan. If it be enmity against God, (as it is) then friendship with Satan. Now it will be hard to make that soul fight in earnest against his friend. Is Satan divided? Will the Devil within, fight against the Devil without? Satan in the heart, shut out Satan at the door? Sometimes indeed there appears a scuffle between Satan and a carnal heart; but it is a mere cheat, like the fighting of two fencers on a stage: you would think at first they were in earnest, but observing how wary they are, where they hit one another, you may soon know they do not mean to kill; and that which puts all out of doubt, when the prize is done, you shall see them making merry together, with what they have got of their spectators, which was all they fought for. When a carnal heart makes the greatest bustle against sin, by complaining of it, or praying against it, follow him but off the stage of duty (where he had gained the reputation of a Saint, the prize he fights for) and you shall see them sit as friendly together in a corner as ever.

Use 1. This takes the wonder off Satan's great conquests in the world: when you look abroad, and see his vast empire, and what a little spot of ground contains Christ's subjects, what heaps of precious souls lie prostrate under this foot of pride, and what a little regiment of Saints march under Christ's banner; perhaps the strangeness of the thing may make you ask, Is Hell stronger than Heaven? The arms of Satan more victorious than the cross of Christ? No such matter; consider but this one thing, and you will wonder that Christ hath any to follow him, rather than he has so few. Satan finds the world unarmed; when the Prince of the World comes, he finds nothing to oppose, the whole soul is in a disposition to yield at the first summons; and if conscience, Governor for God in the creature, stands out a-while, all the other powers, as will and affections, are in a discontent (like mutinous soldiers in a garrison,) who never rest till they have brought over conscience to yield, or against its command, set open the city gate to the enemy, and so deliver traiterously their conscience prisoner to their lusts.

lusts: But when Christ comes to demand the soul, he meets a scornful answer: *Depart from us we desire not the knowledge of the Most High. We will not have this man to reign over us.* With one consent they vote against him, and rise up as the Philistines against Samson, whom they called *the Destroyer of the country.* *Ye will not come unto me,* saith Christ. O how true are poor sinners to the Devil's trust! They will not deliver the castle they hold for Satan, till fired over their heads. Pharaoh opposeth Moses on one hand, and Israel cry out upon him on the other. Such measure hath Christ both at Satan's hand, and the sinners. That which lessened Alexander's conquests, was, he overcame a people buried in barbarism, without arms, or discipline of war; and that which heightened Cæsar's (though not so many) he overcame a people more warlike and furnished. Satan's victories are of poor ignorant, graceless souls, who have neither arms, nor hands, nor hearts to oppose; but when he assaults a Saint, then he sits down before a city with gates and bars, and ever riseth with shame; unable to take the weakest hold, to pluck the weakest Saint out of Christ's hands; but Christ brings souls out of his dominion with a high hand, in spite of all the force and fury of Hell, which like Pharaoh and his host pursue them.

Secondly, This gives us a reason why the Devil hath so great a spite against the gospel. Why? because this opens a magazine of arms and furniture for the soul; the word is that *Tower of David.* Cant. iv. 4. *built for an armoury, wherein there hang a thousand bucklers, all the shields of mighty men.* Hence the Saints have ever had their armour; and the preaching of the gospel unlocks it. As gospel-light ascends, so Satan's shady kingdom of darkness vanisheth, *Rev. xiv. 16.* There one Angel comes forth to preach the everlasting gospel; and another Angel follows at his back, *v. 8.* crying *Victory, Babylon is fallen, is fallen.* The very first charge the gospel gave the kingdom of Darkness, shook the foundations thereof, and put the legions of hell to the run. The seventy whom Christ sent out, bring this speedy account of their embassy: Lord, even the Devils are subject unto us through thy name and Christ answers, *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven.* As if he had said, 'tis no news you tell me, I beheld Satan fall when I sent you; I knew the gospel would make work where it came; and therefore

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therefore no wonder Satan labours to dispossess the gospel which dispossesseth him; he knows that army is near lost, whose magazine is blown up: 'Tis true indeed, under the very gospel the Devil rageth more in such swinish sinners, as are given over of God to be possessed of that fiend, but he is cast out of others, who before the loving kindness of God appeared to them in the gospel, were commanded by him, serving divers lusts and pleasures; but now by the light of the gospel they see their folly, and by the grace it brings are able to renounce him. This, this, is that which torments the foul spirit, to see himself forsaken of his old friends and servants, and this new Lord to come and take his subjects from him; and therefore he labours either by persecution to drive the gospel away, or by policy to persuade a people to send it away from their coasts, and was he ever more likely to effect it among us? What a low esteem hath he brought the preaching of the gospel unto? The price is fallen half in half, to what it was some years past, even among those that have been counted the greatest merchants upon the Saints Exchange. Some, that have thought it worth crossing the seas, even to the Indies almost as far as others fetch their gold) to enjoy the gospel, are loth now to cross the street to hear it at so cheap a rate; and some that come, (who formerly trembled at it) make it most of their errand to mock at it or quarrel with it. Nay, it is come to such a pass, that the word is so heavy a charge to the squeamish stomachs of many professors, that it comes up again presently, and abundance of choler with it against the preacher, especially if it fall foul of the sins and errors of the times, the very naming of which is enough to offend, though the nation be sinking under the weight. What reproaches are the faithful Ministers of the Gospel laden withal? I call Heaven and Earth to witness whether ever they suffered a hotter persecution of the tongue, than in this apostatizing age. A new generation of Professors are started up, that will not know them to be the Ministers of Christ, though those before them, (as well in grace as time, more able to derive their spiritual pedigree, than themselves) have to their death owned them for their spiritual fathers. And must not the ark needs shake, when they that carry it are thus struck at, both in their person and office? What are these men doing? Alas, they know not, *Father, forgive them;*

they are cutting off their right hand with their left; they are making themselves and the nation naked, by despising the gospel, and those that bring it.

Use 3. Consider your deplorable state, who are wholly naked and unarmed. Can you pity the beggars at your door, and not your own dismal soul-nakedness, by which thou lyest open to Heaven's wrath, and Hell's malice? It is reported of Russia, that their poor (through extreme necessity) have this desperate manner of begging in the streets; *Give me and cut me, give me and kill me!* And canst thou let Satan come and cut thy throat in thy bed of sloth, rather than accept of cloaths to cover, yea, armour to defend thee? (I mean Christ and his grace, which in the gospel is exhibited to you) And do not lightly believe your flattering hearts, if they shall tell you, you are provided with these already. I am afraid many a gaudy professor will be found as naked in regard of Christ, and truth of grace, as drunkards and swearers themselves: Such there are, who content themselves with a Christ in profession, in gifts, and in duties, but seek not a Christ in solid grace, and so perish; those indeed are an ornament to the Christian, as the scarf and feather to the soldier, but they quench not the bullet in battle, 'tis Christ and his grace doth that. Grace embellished with gifts is the more beautiful, but these without grace, only the richer spoil for Satan.

The second branch of the first general part of the words follows; and that is, the quality or kind of that armour, the Christian is here directed to provide. It is not any trash will serve the turn, better none than not armour of proof, and none such but the armour of God. In a two-fold respect, it must be of God. First, In institution and appointment. Secondly, In constitution.

## CHAP. II.

*Sheweth, that the Armour we use against Satan, must be divine in the Institution, such only as God appoints.*

*Observ.* **F**IRST, the Christian's armour which he wears, must be of divine institution and appointment. The soldier comes into the field with no arms, but what his general commands; 'tis not left to every one's fancy to bring what weapons he pleases, this will breed confusion. The Christian soldier is bound up to God's order, though the army be on earth, yet the council of war sits in Heaven; this duty ye shall do, that means ye shall use; and to do more or use other than God commands, though with some seeming success against sin; surely such shall be called to an account for this boldness. The discipline of war among men is strict in this case. Some have suffered death by a council of war, even when they have beaten the enemy, because out of their place or beside their order. God is very precise in this point, he will say to such as invent ways to worship him of their own, and coin means to mortify corruption, and obtain comfort in their own mint; *Who hath required this at your hands?* This is truly to be *righteous over-much*, (as Solomon speaks) when we will pretend to correct God's law, and add supplements of our own to his rule. Who will pay that man his wages, that is not set on work by God? God tells Israel, the false prophets shall do them no good because he comes not of his errand, *Jer. xxiii. 22.* so neither will those ways and means help, which are not of God's appointing; God's thoughts are not man's, nor his ways as ours, which he useth to attain his ends by. If man had been to set forth the Israelitish army, now to march out of Egypt; surely his wisdom would have directed rather to have plundered the Egyptians of their horses and arms, (as more necessary for such an expedition) than to borrow their jewels and earrings,



rings, but God will have them come out naked and on foot; and Moses keeps close to his orders; yea, when horses were taken in battle, because God commanded they should be houghed, they obeyed though to their seeming disadvantage.

It was God's war they waged, and therefore but reasonable they should be under his command, they encamped and marched by his order; as the ark moved or rested, they fought by his command, the number appointed by him, the means and weapons they should use, all prescribed by God, as in the assault of *Jericho*: and what is the gospel of all this? (for surely God hath an eye in that to our marching to Heaven, and our fighting with these cursed spirits and lusts that stand in our way) but that we should fight lawfully, using those means, which we have from his mouth, in his word?

This reproveth two sorts.

First, Those that fight Satan in armour, that hath no divine institution, as

First, The Papist. Look into his armoury, and hardly a piece there that will be found armour of God. They fight in the Pope's armour; his authority is the shop wherein their weapons are forged; it were a kind of penance to your patience, to repeat all the several pieces of armour, with which they load silly souls, too heavy indeed for the broadest shoulders among them to bear; yea, more than the wiser sort of them mean to use; their masses, mattins, vigils, pilgrimages, lent-fasts, whippings, vows of chastity, poverty, with a world of such trash; where is a word of God for these? who hath required these things at their hands? a thousand woes will one day fall upon those imposters, who have stripped the people of the true armour of God, and put these reeds and bull rushes in their hands. This may justify us in the sight of God and men, for our departure from them, who will force us to venture the life of our souls in such paper armour, when God hath provided better.

Secondly, The carnal Protestant, who fights in fleshly armour, *2 Cor. x. 3.* The Apostle speaks there of *warring after the flesh*, that is, with weapons or means, which man's carnal wisdom prompts to, and not God's commands, and so are weak. How few are clad with other in the day of battle? First, when Satan tempts to sin, if he hath not presently a peaceable entrance, yet the resistance commonly made is carnal;

carnal; the strength they rest on carnal, their own not God's; the motives carnal, as the fear of man more than of God. Where one saith, How shall I do this, and sin against God? many in their hearts say, How shall I do this, and anger man, displease my master, provoke my parents, and lose the good opinion of my minister? *Herod* feared *John*, and did many things; had he feared God, he would have laboured to have done every thing. The like may be said of all other motives, which have their spring in the creature, not in God, they are armour which will not out-stand shot. If thy strength lie in a creature-lock, it may be soon cut off; if in God, it will hold, as his command; *it is written*: I cannot do it, but I must set my foot on the law of my Maker. Or the love of Christ; I cannot come at my lust, but I must go over my bleeding Saviour; and therefore away, foul tempter, I hate thee and thy motion. This foundation is rock, and will stand; but if it be some carnal respect that balanceth thee, another more weighty may be found of the same kind, which will cast the scales another way. She that likes not the man because of his dress only, may soon be gained when he comes in another habit. Satan can change his suit, and then thy mouth will be stopped when thy carnal argument is taken away. Secondly, When the word or conscience rebuke for sin, what is the armour that men commonly cover their guilty souls withal? Truly no other than carnal. If they cannot evade the charge that these bring, then they labour to mitigate it, by extenuating the fact. 'Tis true they say, I did, (I confess) commit such a fault, but I was drawn in; *The woman gave me, and I did eat*, was *Adam's* fig-leaf armour; 'tis but once or twice, and I hope that breaks no squares; was this such a great business? I know jolly Christians will do as much as this comes to; I thank God, I cannot be charged for whore or thief: This is the armour which must keep off the blow. But if conscience will not be thus taken off, then they labour to divert their thoughts, by striking up the loud musick of carnal delights, that the noise of one may drown the other, or with *Cain*, they will go from the presence of the Lord, and come no more at those ordinances which make their head-ach, and hinder the rest of their raving consciences. If yet the Ghost haunts them, then they labour to pacify it with some good work or other, which they set against their bad; their alms and charity in their old age, must expiate the oppression and violence

violence of their former days; as if this little frankincense were enough to air and take away the plague of God's curse, which is in their ill-gotten goods. Thus poor creatures catch at any sorry covering, which will not so much as hide their shame, much less stop the bullet of God's wrath, when he shall fire upon them; this must be the armour of God's appointing. *Adam* was naked for all his fig-leaves, till God *taught him to make coats of skin*, Gen. iii. 21. covertly (as some think) shadowing out *Christ* the true *Lamb of God*, whose righteousness alone was appointed by him to cover our shame, and arm our naked souls from the stroke of his justice.

Secondly, It reproves those who use the armour of God, but not as God hath appointed, which appears in three sorts.

First, When a person useth a duty appointed by God, not as armour of defence against sin, but as a cover for sin. Who would think him an enemy that wears Christ's colours in his hat, and marcheth after Christ in the exercise of all the duties of his worship? such a one may pass all the courts of guard, without so much as being bid to stand, all take him for a friend, and yet some such there are, who are fighting against Christ all the while. The hypocrite is the man, he learns his postures, gets the words, has his tongue tipt with scripture language, and walks in the habit of a Christian, meerly on a design to drive trade the more closely; like some highwayman in our days who rob in the habit of soldiers, that they may be less suspected; this is desperate wickedness indeed, to take up God's arms, and use them in the Devil's service, of all sinners such shall find the least mercy; false friends shall speed worse than open enemies.

Secondly, They use not the armour of God, as God hath appointed, who put a carnal confidence therein. We must not confide in the armour of God, but in the God of the armour, because all *our weapons are only mighty through God*, 2 Cor. x. The ark was the means of the Jews safety, but carnally applauded and gloried in, hastened their overthrow: So duties and ordinances, gifts and graces in their place, are means for the soul's defence; Satan trembles as much as the Philistines at the ark, to see a soul diligent in the use of duty, and exercise of grace; but when the creature confides in them, this is dangerous. As some, when they

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they have prayed, think they please God, though they take little heed to their steps. Others have so good an opinion of their faith, sincerity, knowledge, that you may as soon make them believe they are dogs, as that they may ever be taken in such an error or sinful practice. Others when assisted in duty, are prone to stroke their own heads with a *Beneficisti Bernarde*, and so promise themselves to speed, because they have done their errand so well. What speak such passages in the hearts of men, but a carnal confidence in their armour to their ruin? Many souls, we may safely say, do not only perish praying, repenting, and believing after a sort, but they perish by their praying, repenting, &c. while they carnally trust in them. As it falls out sometimes, that the soldier in battle loseth his life by means of his own armour, it is so heavy he cannot flee with it, and so close buckled to him, that he cannot get it off, to flee for his life without it. If we be saved we must come naked to Christ, for all our duties, we will not fly to Christ while confiding in them, and some are so locked in them, that they cannot come without them, and so in a day of temptation are trampled under the feet of God's wrath, and Satan's fury.—The poor Publican throws down his arms (that is, all confidence in himself) cries out for quarter at the hands of mercy; *God be merciful unto me a sinner*, and he comes off with his life, he went away justified; but the Pharisee, loaden with his righteousness, and conceited of it, stands to it and is lost.

Thirdly, They do not use the armour of God as such, who in the performance of divine duties, eye not God through them, and this makes them all weak and ineffectual. Then the word is mighty, when read as the word of God; then the gospel preached, powerful to convince the conscience, and revive the drooping spirit, when heard, as the appointment of the great God, and not the exercise of a mean creature. Now it will appear in three things; whether we eye divine appointment in the means.

First, When we engage in a duty, and look not up to God for his blessing. Didst thou eye God's appointment in the means, thou wouldest say, soul, if there come any good of thy present service, it must drop from Heaven, for it is God's appointment; not man's: And can I profit, whether God will or no? Or think to find and bring away any soul-  
enriching

enriching treasure from his ordinance without his leave? had I not best to look up to him, by whose blessing I live more than by my bread?

Again, Secondly, It appears we look not at God's appointment, when we have low thoughts of the means. What is Jordan that I should wash in it? What is the preaching that I should attend on it, where I hear nothing but what I knew before? What are these beggarly elements of water, and bread, and wine? Are not these the reasonings of a soul that forgets who appoints these? Didst thou remember who commands, thou wouldest not question what the command is; what though it be clay, let Christ use it, and it shall open the eyes, though in itself more like to put them out; hadst thou thy eye on God, thou wouldest silence thy carnal reason with this; 'Tis God sends me to such a duty, whatever he saith unto me I will do it, though he should send me (as Christ them) to draw wine out of the pots filled with water.

Thirdly, When a soul leaves off a duty, because he hath not what he expected from it. O, saith the soul, I see it is in vain to follow the means as I have done, still Satan foils me, I will even give it over. Dost thou remember, soul, 'tis God's appointment? Surely then thou wouldest persevere in the midst of discouragement. He that bids thee pray, bids thee pray without ceasing. He that bids thee hear, bids thee wait at the posts of wisdom: Thou wouldest reason thus, God hath set me on duty, and here I will stand till God takes me off, and bids me leave praying.

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### CHAP. III.

*Sheweth that the Armour we use for our Defence against Satan, must not only be divine by Institution, but Constitution also.*

SECONDLY, the Christian's armour must be armour of God, in regard of its make and constitution. My meaning is, 'tis not only God, that must appoint the weapons and arms the Christian useth for his defence, but he must also  
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be the efficient of them, he must work all their work in them and for them. Prayer is an appointment of God, yet this is not armour of proof, except it be a prayer of God, flowing from his spirit.

Hope is the helmet the Saint by command is to wear, but this hope must be God's creature; *who hath begotten us to a lively hope, Jude 20.* Faith is another principal piece, in the Christian's furniture, but it must be *the faith of God's elect, 1 Pet. i. 3. Tit. i. 1.* He is to have righteousness and holiness for his breast-place; but it must be *true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.* Thus you see, it is not armour as armour, but as armour of God, that makes the soul impregnable: *That which is born of God overcometh the world;* a faith born of God, a hope born of God, but the spurious adulterous brood of duties and graces, being begot of mortal seed, cannot be immortal.

Must the soul's armour be of God's make? then look narrowly, whether the armour ye wear, be the workmanship of God or no. There is abundance of false ware put off now a-days; little good armour worn by the multitude of professors; 'tis Satan's after-game he plays, if he cannot please the sinner with his naked state of profaneness; then to put him off with something like grace, some slight stuff that shall neither do him good nor Satan hurt; thus many are like children, that cry for a knife or dagger, and are pleased as well with a bone knife, and wooden dagger, as with the best of all; so they have some armour, it matters not what. Pray they must, but little care how it be performed: Believe in God! Yes, they hope they are not infidels; but what it is, how they come by it, or whether it will hold in an evil day, this never was put to the question in their hearts: Thus thousands perish with a vain conceit, they are armed against Satan, Death, and Judgment, when they are *miserable and naked*; yea, worse than those who have not a rag of civility, to hide their shame from the world's eye; and that in a double respect.

First, It is harder to work on such a soul savingly, because he hath a form, though not the power, and this affords him a plea. A soul purely naked, nothing like the wedding garment on, he is speechless; the drunkard hath nothing to say for himself, when you ask him why he lives so swinishly; you may come up to him, and get within him, and turn the

very mouth of his conscience upon him, which will shoot conviction into him: But to come to deal with one that prays and hears, one that is a pretender to hope and faith in God, here is a man in glittering armour, he hath his weapon in his hand, with which he will keep the Preacher, and the word he chargeth him with at arm's length. Who can say, I am not a Saint? What duty do I neglect? Here is a breast-work he lies under, which makes him not so fair a mark either to the observation or reproof of another, his chief defect being within, where man's eye comes not. Again, it is harder to work on him, because he hath been tampered with already, and miscarried in the essay. How comes such an one to be acquainted with such duties, to make such a profession? The word hath been at work upon him, his conscience hath terrified him from his trade of wickedness into a form of profession; but resting short of Christ, for want of a thorough change, it is harder to remove him than the other; he is like a lock whose wards have been troubled, which makes it harder to turn the key, than if never used. It is better dealing with a wild ragged colt, never backed, than one that in breaking hath took a wrong stroke: a bone quite out of joint, than false set. In a word, such an one hath more to deny than a profane person; the one hath but his lusts, his whores, &c. but the other hath his duties, his seeming graces. O how hard it is to persuade such an one to light, and hold Christ's stirrup, while he and his duties are made Christ's foot-stool.

Secondly, Such an one is deepest in condemnation. None sink so far into Hell as those that come nearest Heaven, because they fall from the greatest height. As it aggravates the torments of damned souls in this respect above Devils, that they have a cord of mercy thrown out to them, which Devils had not; so by how much God by his spirit waits on, pleads with, and by both gains on a soul more than others, by so much such an one (if he perish) will find Hell the hotter; these add to his sin, and the remembrance of his sin in Hell thus accented, will add to his torment. None will have such a sad parting from Christ, as those who went half-way with him, and then left him. Therefore (I beseech you) look to your armour. David would not fight in armour he had not tried, though it was a King's; perhaps some thought him too nice. What, is not the King's armour good enough for David? Thus many will say, Art thou so curious

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and precise? Such a great man doth thus and thus, and hopes to come to Heaven at last, and darest thou not venture thy soul in his armour? No, Christian, follow not the example of the greatest on earth; 'tis thy own soul thou ventur'st in battle, therefore thou canst not be too choice of thy armour. Bring thy heart to the word, as the only touch-stone of thy grace and furniture; the word (I told you) is *the Tower of David*, from whence thy armour must be fetch'd, if thou canst find this tower-stamp on it, then it is of God, else not. Try it therefore by this one scripture-stamp. Those weapons are mighty, which God gives his Saints to fight his battles withal, *2 Cor. x. 4. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God.* The sword of the spirit hath its point and edge, whereby it makes its way into his heart and conscience, through the impenitency of the one, and stupidity of the other, (wherein Satan, as with buff and coat of mail, arms the sinner against God) and there cuts and slashes, kills and mortifies lust in his own castle, where Satan thinks himself impregnable. The breast-plate which is of God, doth not bend and break at every dart of temptation, but is of such a divine temperament, that it repels Satan's motions with scorn. Should such an one as I sin? as *Nehemiah* in another case; and such are all the rest.— Now try whether your weapons be mighty or weak; what can you do or suffer more for God, than any hypocrite that is clad in fleshly armour? I will tell you what the world saith, and if you be Christians, clear yourselves, and wipe off that dirt which they throw upon your glittering armour; they say, “ These Professors indeed have God more in their talk than we, they are oftener in the mount of duty than we, but when they come down into their shops, relations or worldly employments, then the best of them all is but like one of us; they can throw the tables of God's commandment out of their hands as well as we, come from a sermon, and be as covetous and griping, as peevish and passionate as the worst; they shew as little love to Christ as others; when it is matter of cost, as to relieve a poor saint, or maintain the gospel, you may get more from a stranger, an enemy, than a professing brother.” O Christians! either vindicate the name of Christ, whose ensign you seem to march after, or throw away your seeming armour, by which you have drawn the eyes of the world upon you.



If you will not, Christ himself will cashier you, and that with shame enough 'ere long. Never call that armour of God, which defends thee not against the power of Satan. Take therefore the several pieces of your armour, and try them, as the Soldier before he fights, will set his helmet or head-piece, as a mark, at which he lets fly a brace of bullets, and as he finds them, so will he wear them or leave them; but be sure thou shootest scripture-bullets. Thou boasteth of a breast-plate of righteousness; ask thy soul, didst thou ever in thy life perform a duty to please God, and not to accommodate thyself; thou hast prayed often against thy sin, a great noise of these pieces have been heard coming from thee by others, as if there was some hot fight between thee and thy corruption, but canst thou indeed shew one sin that thou hast slain by all thy praying? *Joseph* was alive, though his coat was brought bloody to *Jacob*; and so may sin be for all thy mortified look in duty, and the out-cry thou makest against them. If thou would thus try every piece, thy credulous heart would not so easily be cheated with Satan's false ware.

*Object.* But is all armour that is of God thus mighty? We read of weak grace, little faith, how can this then be a trial of our armour, whether of God or not?

I answer, The weakness of grace is in respect of stronger grace, but that weak grace is strong and mighty in comparison of counterfeit grace: Now I do not bid thee try the truth of thy grace by such a power as is peculiar to stronger grace, but by that power which will distinguish it from false; true grace, when weakest, is stronger than false when strongest. There is a principle of divine life in it, which the other hath not: Now life, as it gives excellency, (a flea or fly by reason of its life; is more excellent than the sun in all its glory) so it gives strength. The slow motion of a living man (though so feeble that he cannot go a furlong in a day) yet coming from life, imports more strength than is in a ship, which (though it sails swiftly) hath its motion from without: Thus possibly an hypocrite may exceed the true Christian in the bulk and outside of a duty, yet because his strength is not from life, but from some wind and tide abroad that carries him, and the Christian's is from an inward principle, therefore the Christian's weakness is stronger than the hypocrite in his greatest enlargements. I shall name but two acts of grace when weakest, whereby the Christian exceeds the hypocrite in all his best array. You will say, then grace is at a weak stay indeed, when the Christian is persuaded

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suaded to commit a sin, a great sin, such an one as possibly a carnal person would not have it said of him for a great matter: so low may the tide of grace fall, yet true grace at such an ebb, will appear of greater strength and force than the other.

First, This principle of grace will never leave, till the soul weeps bitterly with *Peter*, that it hath offended so good a God. Speak, O ye hypocrites, can you shew one tear that ever you shed in earnest for a wrong done to God? possibly ye may weep to see the bed of sorrow which your sins are making for you in Hell; but ye never loved God so well, as to mourn for the injury ye have done the name of God. It is a good gloss *Augustine* hath upon *Esai's* tears. *Heb. xii. Flevit quod perditas, non quod vendidit.* He wept that he lost the blessing, not that he sold it. Thus we see the excellency of the Saint's sorrow above the hypocrite's. The Christian by his sorrow, shews himself a conqueror of that sin, which even now overcame him, while the hypocrite by his pride shews himself a slave to a worse lust than that he resists. While the Christian commits a sin he hates it; Whereas the other loves it while he forbears it.

Secondly, When true grace is under the foot of a temptation, yet then it will stir up in the heart a vehement desire of revenge, like a prisoner in his enemy's hand, who is thinking and plotting how to get out, and what he will do when he is out, waiting and longing every moment for his delivery, that he may again take up arms; O God, remember me, saith *Samson*, *this once I pray thee, and strengthen me, that I may be at once avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes*, *Judges xvi. 27.* Thus prays the gracious soul, that God would but spare him a little, and strengthen him but once before he dies, that he may be avenged on his pride, unbelief, and those sins whereby he hath most dishonoured his God; but a false heart, is so far from studying revenge, that he rather swells like the sea, against the law, which banks his lust in, and is angry with God; who hath made sin such a leap, that he must hazard his soul if he will have it.

CHAP. IV.

*Of the Entireness of our Furniture. It must be the whole armour of God.*

THE third branch in the Saint's furniture is, the entireness thereof, *The Whole Armour of God*. The Christian's armour must be compleat, and that in a threefold respect.

SECT. I.

First, He must be armed in every part *cap-a-pe*, soul and body, the powers of the one, and senses of the other, no part left naked. A dart may fly in at a little hole (like that which brought the message of death to *Ahab*, through the joints of his harness) and Satan is an archer, who can shoot to a nicety. If all the man be armed, and only the eye left without, Satan can soon shoot his fire balls of lust in at that loop-hole, which shall set the whole house on a flame. Eve looked but on the tree, and a poisonous dart struck her to the heart. If the eye be shut, and the ear be open to corrupt communication, Satan will soon wriggle in at this hole; if all the outward senses be guarded, and the heart not kept with all diligence, he will soon by his own thoughts be betrayed into Satan's hands.

Our enemies are on every side, and so must our armour be, *on the right hand, and on the left*, 2 Cor. vi. 7. The Apostle calls sin, an enemy that surrounds us. If there be any part of the line unguarded, or weakly provided there Satan falls on; we see the enemy often enter the city at one side, whilst he is beat back on the other, for want of care to keep the whole line. Satan divides his temptations into several squadrons, one he employs to assault here, another to storm there. We read of fleshly wickedness and spiritual wickedness; whilst thou repellst Satan tempting thee

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to fleshly wickedness, he may be entering thy city at the other gate of spiritual wickedness. Perhaps thou hast kept thy integrity in the practical part of thy life; but what armour hast thou to defend thy head, thy judgment?—If he surprize thee here, corrupting that with some error, then thou wilt not long hold out in thy practice. He that could not get thee to profane the Sabbath among Sensualists and Atheists, will under the disguise of such a corrupt principle as Christian liberty, prevail. Thus we see what need we have of universal armour, in regard of every part.

### SECT. II.

Secondly, The Christian must be in compleat armour, in regard of the several pieces and weapons that make up the whole armour of God. Indeed there is a concatenation of graces, they hang together like links in a chain, stones in an arch, members in the body; prick one vein, and the blood of the whole body may run out at that sluice; neglect one duty, and no other will do us good. The Apostle *Peter*, in *his second Epistle*, chap. i. ver. 5, 6, 7. presseth the Christian to a joint endeavour, to increase the whole body of grace; indeed that is health when the whole body thrives, *Add* (saith he) *to your faith virtue*; faith is the file-leading grace. Well, hast thou faith? add virtue: True faith, is of a working, stirring nature; without good works it is dead or dying. *Fides pinguescit operibus. Luther.* 'Tis kept in plight and heart by a holy life, as the flesh which covers the frame of a man's body, though it receives its heat from the vitals within, yet helps to preserve the very life of those vitals; thus good works and gracious actions have their life from faith, yet are necessary helps to preserve the life of faith; thus we see sometimes the child nursing the parent that bare it, and therein performs but his duty. Thou art fruitful in good works, yet thou art not out of the Devil's shot, except thou addest *to thy virtue, knowledge*. This is the candle without which faith cannot see to do its work.

Art thou going to give an alms? if it be not *oculata charitas*, if charity hath not this eye of knowledge to direct, when, how, what, and to whom thou art to give, thou mayest

est at once wrong God, the person thou relievest, and thyself. Art thou humbling thyself for thy sin? for want of knowledge in the tenour of the gospel, Satan may play upon thy ignorance, and either persuade thee thou art not humbled enough, when God knows, thou art almost drowned with thy tears, and even carried down by the impetuous torrent of thy sorrow into despair; or else, shewing thee thy blubbered face, may flatter thee into a carnal confidence of thy humiliation. Perhaps thou seest the name of God dishonoured in the place where thou livest, and thy spirit is stirred within thee, (as *Paul at Athens*) now if knowledge sits not in the saddle to rein and bridle thy zeal, thou wilt be soon carried over hedge and ditch, till thou fallest into some precipice or other by thy irregular acting: Neither is knowledge enough, except thou art armed with *temperance*, which (I conceive) is that grace, whereby the Christian (as master of his own house) so orders his affections, that they do not irregularly move, or inordinately launch out into desires of, cares for, or joy in the creature comforts of this life, without which, Satan will be too hard for thee. The Historian tells us, that in one of the famous battles between the English and French, that which lost the French the day, was a shower of English arrows, which did so gall their horse, as put the whole army into disorder, their horses knowing no ranks, did tread down their own men. The affections are but as the horse to the rider, on which knowledge should be mounted; if Satan's barbed arrows light on them, so that the desires of the creature prove unruly, and jostle with thy desires of Christ, thy care to keep thy credit or estate, put thy care to keep a good conscience to disorder; and thy carnal joy in wife and child trample down, or get before thy joy in the Lord; judge on which side victory is like to fall. Well, suppose thou marchest provided thus far in goodly array, towards Heaven, whilst thou art swimming in prosperity, must thou not also provide for foul way and weather, I mean, an afflicted estate? Satan will line the hedges with a thousand temptations, when thou comest into the narrow lanes of adversity, where thou canst not run from this sort of temptation, as in the campaign of prosperity. Possibly thou that didst escape the snare of an alluring world, mayest be dismounted by the same when it frowns; though repentance keep thee from being drunk with the sweet wines of those pleasures,

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pleasures, yet for want of *Patience*, thou mayest be drunk with the wine of astonishment, which is in affliction's hand: Therefore, saith the Apostle, *to temperance, add patience*; either possess thyself in patience, or else some raving Devil of discontent will possess thee. An impatient soul in affliction is a Bedlamite in chains; yea, too like the Devil in his chains, that rageth against God whilst he is fettered by him. Well, hast thou patience? an excellent grace indeed, but not enough; thou must be pious as well as patient. Therefore saith the Apostle *To patience add godliness*. There is an atheistical stupid patience, and there is a godly Christian patience: Satan numbs the conscience of the one, and no wonder he complains not that feels not; but the Spirit of Christ sweetly calms the other, not by taking away the sense of pain, but by overcoming it with the sense of his love. Now godliness comprehends the whole worship of God, inward and outward. If thou be ever so exact in thy morals, and not a worshipper of God, then thou art an Atheist. If thou dost worship God, and that devoutly, but not by scripture rule, thou art an Idolater. If according to the rule, but not in spirit and truth, then thou art an hypocrite, and so fallest into the Devil's mouth. Or if thou dost give God one piece of his worship, and deniest another, still Satan comes to his market, *Prov. xxviii. 9. He that turneth back his ear from hearing the law, his prayer is an abomination to the Lord.* Yet (Christian) all thy armour is not on. Thy Godliness indeed would suffice, wert thou to live in a world by thyself, or hast nothing to do but immediate communion with God. But, Christian, thou must not always dwell on this mount of immediate worship; when thou descendest, thou hast many brethren and servants to thy Father, who live with thee in the same family; and thou must comport thyself becomingly, or else thy Father will be angry. First, thou hast brethren, heirs of the same promise with thee, therefore thou must add to holiness *brotherly kindness*. If Satan can set you at odds, he gives a deep wound to your godliness. You will hardly join hearts in a duty, that cannot join hands in love. Secondly, There are not only brethren, but servants, a multitude of profane carnal ones, who though they never had the names of sons and daughters, yet retain to God's family, and thy heavenly Father will have thee walk unblameably, yea, winningly to those that are without; which that thou mayest

mayest do, thou must add to brotherly kindness *Charity*; by which grace thou shalt be willing to do good to the worst of men: When they curse thee, thou must pray for them; yea, pray for no less than a Christ, a Heaven for them. *Father, forgive them*, said Christ, while they were raking in his side for his heart's blood. And truly I am persuaded the want of this last piece of armour hath given Satan great advantage in these our times. We are afraid our charity should be too broad, whereas in this sense, if it be not as wide as the world, it is too straight for the command which bids us *do good to all*. May not we Ministers be charged with the want of this? when the strain of our preaching is solely directed to the Saints, and no pains taken in rescuing poor captive souls, yet uncalled, out of the Devil's clutches, who may haul them to Hell without any disturbance, while we are comforting the Saints, and preaching their priveleges, but in the mean time let the ignorant be ignorant still, and the profane, profane still, for want of a compassionate charity to their souls, which would excite us to the reproofing and exhorting of them, that they might also be brought into the way of life, as well as the Saints encouraged, who are walking therein. We are stewards to provide bread for the Lord's house; the greatest part of our hearers cannot, must not have the children's bread, and shall we therefore give them no portion at all? Christ's charity pitied the multitude, to whom in his public preaching he made special application, as in that famous sermon, most part of which he spent in rousing up the sleepy consciences of the hypocritical Pharisees, by those thunder-claps of woes and curses so often denounced against them, *Matt. xxiii*. Again, how great advantage hath Satan from the want of this charity in our families? Is it not observed how little care is taken by professing Governors of such societies, for the instructing their youth? Nay, it is a principle which some have drank in, that it is not their duty. O where is their charity in the mean time, when they can see Satan come within their own walls, and let him drive a child, a servant, in their ignorance and profaneness to Hell, and not so much as sally out upon his enemy by a word of reproof or instruction, to rescue their silly souls out of the murderer's hands? We must leave them to their liberty forsooth, and that is as fair play as we can give the Devil; give but corrupt nature enough of this rope, and it will soon strangle the very principles of God and religion in their tender years.

## SECT. III.

Thirdly, The entireness of the Saint's armour may be taken not only for every part and piece of the Saint's furniture, but for the completeness and perfection of every piece. As the Christian is to endeavour after every grace, so is he to press after the advance and increase of every grace, even to perfection itself; as he is to add to his faith, virtue, so is he to add faith to faith, he is ever to be completing of his grace. It is that which is frequently pressed upon believers, *Matt. v. 48. Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. And purify yourselves as God is pure.* Where we have an exact copy set, not as if we could equalize that purity and perfection which is in God, but to make us strive the more, when we shall see how infinitely short we fall of our copy when we write the fairest hand. So *James i. 3. Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be entire, wanting nothing, or wanting in nothing.* Thou who makest a hard shift to carry a little burthen with thy little patience, wouldest sink under a greater, therefore there is need that patience should be ever perfecting, lest at last we meet a burthen too heavy for our weak shoulders. Take a few reasons why the Christian should be thus completing of his grace.

First, Because grace is subject to decays, and ever needs completing, as in an army, especially which often engages in battle, their arms are battered and broken, one man hath his helmet bent, another his sword gapt, a third his pistol unfixed; and therefore recruits are ever necessary. In one temptation, the Christian hath his helmet of hope beaten off his head, in another, his patience hard put to it. The Christian had need have an armoury at hand to make up his loss, and that speedily, for Satan is most like to fall on, when the Christian is least prepared to receive his charge. *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to sift you;* he knew they were at that time weakly provided, his Captain now to be taken from the head of their troop, discontented among themselves, striving who should be greatest; and their recruits of stronger grace, which the Spirit was to bring, not yet come. Now he hath a design to surprize them, and therefore Christ,



careful to prevent him, promiseth speedily to dispatch his Spirit for their supply, *Acts* i. 4. and in the mean time sends them to Jerusalem, to stand as it were in a body in their joint supplications, upon their guard, while he comes to their relief, shewing us in the weakness of our graces what to do, and whither to go for supply.

Secondly, Because Satan is completing his skill and wrath. It is not for nought that he is called the old serpent; subtle by nature, but more by experience; wrathful by nature, yet every day more and more enraged; like a bull, the longer he is baited, the more fury he shews. And therefore we who are to grapple with him, now his time is so short, had need come well appointed into the field.

Thirdly, It is the end of all God's dispensations, to complete his Saints in their graces and comforts. Wherefore doth he lop and prune by afflictions, but to *purge, that they may bring forth more fruit*, *Jam.* v. 2. *Tribulation works patience*, *Rom.* xv. 3. It is God's appointment for that end. *It works*, that is, it increaseth the Saints patience? it enrageth indeed the wicked, but meekens the Saints. It is his design in the gospel preached, to carry on his Saints *from faith to faith*, *Rom.* i. 17. And accordingly he hath furnished the church with instruments, and those with gifts, *for the perfecting of the Saints, and for edifying of the body of Christ*, *Eph.* iv. 14. Wherefore doth the scaffold stand, and the workman on it, if the building go not up? For us not to advance under such means is to make void the counsel of God. Therefore the Apostle blames the Christian Jews, *Heb.* v. 12. for their non-proficiency in the school of Christ, *When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God.*

*Use.* O how few are there who endeavour thus to promote their spiritual state, and labour to perfect what is yet lacking in their knowledge, patience, and the rest.

First, tell some of adding faith to faith, one degree of grace to another, and you shall find they have more mind to join house to house, and lay field to field; their souls are a-thirst, ever gaping for more, but of what? not of Christ, or Heaven; It is earth; earth they never think they have enough of, till Death comes and stops their mouth with a shovel-ful digged out of their own grave. What a tormenting life must they needs have, who are always crying for  
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more, and yet cannot press their covetous desires to death? O Sirs, the only way (if men would believe it) to quench this thirst to the creature, were to have another after Christ and Heaven. If but a large heart vehemently thirsting after these, the other will die alone; as the feverish thirst doth when nature comes to her temper. Secondly, Others labour not thus to perfect grace, because they have a conceit they are perfect already, and upon this throw away praying, hearing, and all other ordinances, as strings for those babes in grace to be carried by, who are not arrived to their high attainments. O what fools doth pride make men! Truly Heaven were no such desirable place, if we should be no more perfect than these, a sort of people that are too high for this world, and too low for another. The way by which God cures this phrenzy of pride, we have in these days seen to be something like that in *Nebuchadnezzar*, to give them the heart of a beast for a time, I mean suffer them to fall into beastly practices, by which he shews them how far they are from that perfection they dream of. Thirdly, Others who have true grace, and desire the advancement of it, yet are discouraged in their endeavour for more, from too deep a sense of their present penury. Bid some such labour for more power over corruption, more faith on, and love to God, that they may be able to do the will of God cheerfully, and suffer it in the greatest afflictions patiently, yea, thankfully, and they will never believe, that they, whose faith is so weak, and love so chill, and stock so little in hand, should ever attain to any thing like such a pitch. You may as well persuade a beggar with one poor penny in his purse, that if he will go and trade with that, he shall come to be Lord Mayor of *London* before he die. But why, poor hearts, should you thus despise the day of small things? Do you not see a little grain of mustard-seed spread into a tree, and weak grace compared to it for its growth at last, as well as littleness at first? Darest thou say thou hast no grace at all? If thou hast but any, (though the least that ever any had to begin with) I dare tell thee that he hath done more for thee in that, than he should in making that which is now so weak, as perfect as the Saint's grace is now in heaven. First, he hath done more, considering it as an act of power. There is a greater gulph between no grace and grace, than between weak grace and strong, between a chaos and nothing, than between a chaos  
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and this beautiful frame of Heaven and earth. The first day's work of both creations is the greatest. Secondly, consider it as an act of grace, it is a greater mercy to give the first grace of conversion, than to crown that with glory. It is more grace and condescension in a Princee to marry a poor damsel, than having married her, to cloath her like a Princess ; he was free to do the first or not ; but his relation to her pleads strongly for the other. God might have chosen whether he would have given thee grace or no, but having done this, thy relation to him and his covenant also oblige him to add more and more, till he hath fitted thee as a bride for himself in glory.

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## CHAP. V.

### *Of the Use of our Spiritual Armour, or the Exercise of Grace.*

THE fourth and last branch in the Saint's furniture is, the use they are to make thereof, *Put on the whole Armour of God.* It is one thing to have armour in the house, and another thing to have it buckled on ; to have grace in the principle, and grace in the act. So that the instruction will be,

*Doct.* It is not enough to have grace, but this grace must be kept in exercise. The Christian's armour is made to be worn ; no laying down, or putting off our armour, till we have done our warfare, and finished our course. Our armour and our garment of flesh go off together ; then indeed will be no need of watch and ward, shield or helmet. Those military duties and field-graces (as I may call faith, hope, and the rest) shall be honourably discharged. In Heaven we shall appear, not in armour, but in robes of glory ; but here they are to be worn night and day ; we must walk, work, and sleep in them, or else we are not true Soldiers of Christ. This Paul professeth to endeavour, *Acts xxiv. 16.*

*Hercin*

*Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.* Here we have this holy man at his arms, training and exercising himself in his postures, like some soldier by himself handling his pike, and inuring himself before the battle. Now the reason of this is,

## SECT. I.

First, Christ commands us to have our armour on, our grace in exercise, *Luke xii. 35. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning.* Christ speaks either in a martial phrase, as to soldiers, or in a domestic, as to servants: If as to soldiers, then let your loins be girded, and your lights burning, is, that we should be ready for a march, having our armour on (for the belt goes over all) and our match-lights ready to give fire at the first alarm of temptation. If as to servants, which seems more natural, then he bids us (as our master is gone abroad) not through sloth or sleep put off our cloaths, and put our lights out, but stand ready to open when he shall come, though at midnight. It is not fit the master should stand at the door knocking, and the servant within sleeping; indeed there is no duty the Christian hath in charge but implies this daily exercise, *Pray, but how? without ceasing. Rejoice, but when? Evermore. Give thanks, for what? in every thing,* 1 *Thes. v. 16, 17.* The shield of faith, and helmet of hope, we must hold to the end, 1 *Pet. i. 13.* The sum of all which is, that we should walk in the constant exercise of these duties and graces. Where the soldier is placed, there he stands, and must neither stir nor sleep till he be brought off. When Christ comes, that soul shall only have his blessing whom *he finds so doing.*

Secondly, Satan's advantage is great when grace is not in exercise. When the Devil found Christ so ready to receive his charge, and repel his temptation, he soon had enough; it is said, *He departed for a season,* *Luke iv. 13.* as if in his shameful retreat he had comforted himself with hopes of surprising Christ unawares, at another season more advantageous to his design; and we find him coming again, in the most likely time indeed to have attained his end, had his enemy been man, and not God. Now if this bold fiend did thus watch

watch and observe Christ from time to time, doth it not behove thee to look about thee, lest he take thy grace at one time or other napping? What he misseth now by thy watchfulness, he may gain anon by thy negligence. Indeed he hopes thou wilt be tired out with continual duty: Surely, saith Satan, (when he sees the Christian up, and fervent in duty) this will not hold long. When he finds him tender of conscience, and scrupulous of occasion to sin, This is but for a while; 'ere long I shall have him unbend his bow, and unbuckle his armour, and then have at him. Satan knows what orders thou keepest in thy house and closet, and though he hath not a key to thy heart, yet he can stand in the next room to it, and lightly hear what is whispered there. He hunts the Christian by the scent of his own feet, and if once he doth but smell which way thy heart inclines, he knows how to take the hint; if but one door be unbolted, one work unarmed, one grace off it's carriage, here is advantage enough.

Thirdly, Because it is so hard a work, to recover the activity of grace once lost, and to revive a duty in disuse: *I have put off my coat*, saith the spouse, *Cant. v. 3.* She had given way to a lazy distemper, was laid upon her bed of sloth, and how hard is it to raise her? Her beloved is at the door, beseeching her by all the means of love, which might bring to her remembrance the near relation between them; *my Sister, my Love, my Dove, open to me*; and yet she riseth not: He tells her, *His locks are filled with the drops of the night*; yet she stirs not: What is the matter? Her coat was off, and she is loth to put it on; she had given way to her sloth, and now she knows not how to shake it off: She could have been glad to have her beloved's company, if himself would have opened the door; and he desired as much hers, if she would rise to let him in; and upon these terms they part. The longer a soul hath neglected duty, the more ado there is to get it taken up; partly through shame, the soul having played the truant, now knows not how to look God in the face; and partly from the difficulty of the work, being double to what another finds, that walks in the exercise of his grace, here is all out of order. It requires more time and pains for him to tune his instrument, than for another to play the lesson. He goes to duty as to a new work, as a scholar that hath not looked on his book some while, his lesson is almost out of his head; whereas another that was  
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but even now conning it over, hath it entirely. Perhaps 'tis an affliction thou art called to bear, and thy patience unexercised, little or no thoughts thou hast had for such a time (while thou wert frisking in a full pasture) and now thou kickest and flingest, even *as a bullock, unaccustomed to the yoke*, Jer. xxxi. 18. Whereas another goes meekly and patiently under the like cross, because he had been stirring up his patience, and fitting the yoke to his neck. You know what a confusion there is in a town, at some sudden alarm in the dead of the night, the enemy at the gates, and they asleep within. O what a cry is there heard! one wants his clothes, another his sword, a third knows not what to do for powder; thus in a fright they run up and down, which would not be if the enemy found them upon their guard, orderly waiting for his approach. Such a hubbub there is in a soul that keeps not his armour on, this piece and that will be to seek when he should use it.

Fourthly, We must keep grace in exercise in respect of others, our fellow soldiers. *Paul* had this in his eye, when he was exercising himself to keep a good conscience, that he might not be a scandal to others. The cowardice of one may make others run; the ignorance of one soldier that hath not skill to handle his arms, may do mischief to his fellow-soldiers about him, some have shot their friends for their enemies; the unwise walking of one professor, makes many others fare the worse. But say, thou dost not fall so far as to become a scandal, yet thou canst not be so helpful to thy fellow-brethren as thou shouldst. God commanded the *Reubenites* and *Gadites* to go before their brethren ready armed, until the land was conquered. Thus, Christian, thou art to be helpful to thy fellow-brethren, who have not (it may be) that settlement of peace in their spirit as thyself, not that measure of grace or comfort: Thou art to help such weak ones, and go before them (as it were) armed for their defence: Now if thy grace be not in exercise, thou art so far unserviceable to thy weak brother. Perhaps thou art a master or parent who hast a family under thy wing, they fare as thou thrive; if thy heart be in a holy frame, they fare the better in the duties thou performest; if thy heart be dead and down, they are losers by thy hand. So that as the nurse eats the more for the babe's sake she suckles, so shouldest thou for their sake who are under thy tuition, be more careful to exercise thy own grace and cherish it.

## SECT. II.

*Object.* O but (some may say) this is hard work indeed, our armour never off, our grace always in exercise. Did God ever mean religion should be such a toilsome business as this would make it?

*Ans.* Thou speakest like one of the foolish world, and shewest thyself a mere stranger to the Christian's life that speakest thus; a burden to exercise grace! why, it is no burden to exercise the acts of nature, to eat, to drink, to walk, all delightful to us in our right temper; if any of these be otherwise, nature is oppressed; if stult, then difficult to breathe; if sick, then the meat offensive we eat: So take a Saint in his right temper, 'tis his joy to be employed in the exercise of his grace in this or that duty. *Ps.* cxxii. 1. *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of the Lord;* his heart leaped at the motion. When any occasion diverts him from communion with God, though he likes it never so well, yet it is unwelcome and displeasing to him, as you who are used to be in your shops from morning to night, how tedious it is for you to be abroad some days, though among good friends, because you are not where your work and calling lies? A Christian in duty is one in his calling, as it were in his shop where he should be, yea, where he would be, and therefore far from being tedious. Religion is so burthensome to none, as to those who are remiss in the exercise of it. Use makes heavy things light; we hardly feel the weight of our cloaths, because fitted to us, and worn daily by us; whereas the same weight on our shoulder would trouble us. Thus the grievousness of religious duties to carnal ones, is taken away in the Saints, partly by the fitness of them to the Saints principles, as also by their daily exercise in them. The Disciples, when newly entered into the ways of Christ, could not pray much, or fast long; the bottles were new, and that wine too strong; but when they had walked a few-years, they grew mighty in both. Dost thou complain that Heaven's way is rugged? be constantly walking in it, and that will make it smooth.

But secondly, Were this constant exercise of grace more troublesome to the flesh, (which is the only complaint) the

sweet advantage that accrues by this to the Christian, will abundantly recompence all his labour and pains.

First, The exercise of thy grace will increase thy grace; *The diligent hand makes rich.* A provident man counts that lost which might have been got, not only when his money is stole out of his chest, but when it lies there unimproved. Such a commodity (saith the tradesman) if I had bought with that money in my bags, would have brought me in so much gain, which is now lost; so the Christian may say, My dawning knowledge, had I followed on to know the Lord, might have spread to broad day: *I have more understanding,* saith *David, than all my teachers.* How came he by it? he will tell you in the next words, *for thy testimonies are my meditation,* Psal. cxix. 99. He was more in the exercise of duty. The best wits are not always the greatest scholars, because their study is not suitable to their parts; neither always proves he the richest man, that sets up with the greatest stock. A little grace well husbanded by daily exercise, will increase; while greater, neglected, shall decay.

Secondly, as exercise increaseth, so it evidenceth grace. Would a man know whether he be lame or no, let him rise, he will be sooner satisfied by one turn in a room, than by a long dispute, and he sit still. Wouldst thou know whether thou lovest God? Be frequent in exerting acts of love; the more the fire is blown up, the sooner 'tis seen; and so of all other graces. Sometimes the soul is questioning whether it hath any patience, any faith, till God comes and puts him into an afflicted state (where he must either exercise this grace, or perish) and then it appears like one that thinks he cannot swim, yet being thrown into the river, and exerting all his strength, he makes a shift to swim to land, and sees what he can do. How oft have we heard a Christian say, I thought I could never have endured such a pain, trusted God in such a straight; but now God hath taught me what he can do for me, what he hath wrought in me? and this thou might have known before, if thou wouldest have often stirred up and exercised thy grace.

Thirdly, Exercise of grace doth invite God to communicate himself to such a soul. God sets the Christian at work, and then meets him in it. *Up and be doing, and the Lord be with you.* He sets the soul a reading as the eunuch, and then joins to his chariot; a praying, and then comes the messenger from heaven, *O Daniel, greatly beloved.* The spouse who



lost her beloved *on her bed*, finds him as she comes *from the sermon*, Cant. iii. 4. *It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loved.*

### SECT. III.

*Use 1.* This falls heavy on their heads, who are so far from exercising grace, that they walk in the exercise of their lusts; their hearts are like a glass-house, the fire is never out, the shop-windows never shut, they are always at work, hammering some wicked project or other upon the anvil of their hearts; there are some who give scope to their lusts; what their wretched hearts will have; they foster their lusts, as some their children, deny them nothing, who (as it is recorded of *David to Adonijah*) do not so much as say to their souls, *Why dost thou so? Why art thou so proud, so covetous, so profane?* They spend their days in making provision for these guests; as at some inns, the house is never empty, but as one guest goes out, another comes in; as one lust is served, another is calling for attendance; as some exercise grace more than others, so there are greater traders in sin than others, and return more wrath in a day, than others in a month. Happy are such, (in comparison of these) who are chained up by God's restraint upon their outward man, that they cannot drive on so furiously as these, who by health of body, power, and greatness in place, riches and treasures in their coffers, numbness in their consciences, are hurried on to fill up the measure of their sins. We read of the *Assyrian*, that he *enlarged his heart as Hell*, stretching out his desires as men do their bags that are full of money, to hold more, *Hab. ii. 5.* Thus the adulterer, as if his body were not quick enough to execute the commands of his lust, stirs it up by sending forth his amorous glances, which come home, *laden with adultery*, blows up this fire with unchaste sonnets, proper fuel for the Devil's kitchen; and the malicious man, that he may lose no time from his lust, is tearing his neighbour in pieces as he lies on his bed, cannot sleep unless some such bloody sacrifice be offered to his ravening lust. O how may this shame the Saints! How oft is your zeal so hot, that you cannot sleep till your hearts have been in Heaven, as you are on your beds, and there pacified with  

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the sight of your dear Saviour, and some embraces of love from him?

*Use 2.* It reproves those who flout and mock at the Saints, while exercising their graces; none so jeered as the Saint in his calling. Men may work in their shops, and every one follow his calling as diligently as they please, and no wonder made of this by those that pass by in the streets; but let the Christian be seen at work for God, in the exercise of any duty or grace, and he is hooted at, despised, yea hated. Few so bad indeed, but seem to like religion in the notion, they can commend a sermon of holiness, like a discourse of God, or Christ in the pulpit; but when these are really set before their eyes, as they sparkle in a Saint's conversation, they are very contemptible and hateful to them; this living and walking in holiness, bites; and though they liked the Preacher's art, in painting forth the same in his discourse, yet now they run from them, and spit at them; this exercise of grace offends the profane heart, and stirs up the enmity that lies within: As *Michal*, who could not but flout *David*, to see him dancing before the ark. He that commended the Preacher for making a learned discourse of zeal, will rail on a Saint, expressing an act of zeal in his place and calling; now grace comes too near him. A naughty heart must stand at some distance from Holiness, that the beams thereof may not bear too strongly on his conscience, and so he likes it. Thus the Pharisees, the Prophets of old, were holy men in their account, and they can lavish out their money on their tombs in honour of them; but Christ (who was more than all of them) is scorned and hated; what is the mystery of this? The reason was, these Prophets are off the stage, and Christ on. *Pascitur in vivis livor, post fata quiescit.*

*Use 3.* Try by this whether you have grace or no, dost thou walk in the exercise of thy grace? He that hath clothes, surely will wear them, and not be seen naked. Men talk of their faith, repentance, love to God; these are precious graces, but why do they not let us see those walking abroad in their daily conversation? Surely if such guests were in thy soul, they would look out sometimes at the window, and be seen abroad in this duty, and that holy action; grace is of a stirring nature, and not such a dead thing (like an image) which you may lock up in a chest, and none shall know what God you worship; no, grace will shew itself, it will walk with you in all places and companies, it will buy with you,  
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and sell for you, it will have a hand in all your enterprises, it will comfort you when you are sincere and faithful for God, and it will complain and chide you when you are otherwise; go to, stop its mouth, and Heaven shall hear its voice; it will groan, mourn, and strive, even as a living man when you would smother him. I will as soon believe the man to be alive, that lies peaceably as he is nailed up in his coffin, without strife, or bustle, as that thou hast grace, and never exercise it in any act of spiritual life. What man! hast thou grace, and carried so peaceably, as a fool to the stocks, by thy lust? Why hangest thou there nailed to thy lust? If thou hast grace, come down and we will believe it; but if thou art such a tame slave, as to sit still under the command of lust, thou deceivest thyself. Hast thou grace, and shew none of it in the condition thou art placed in? May be thou art rich, dost thou shew thy humility towards those that are beneath thee? Dost thou shew a heavenly mind breathing after Heaven more than earth? It may be thy heart is puffed with thy estate, that thou lookest on the poor as creatures of some lower *species* than thyself, and disdainest them, and as for Heaven thou thinkest not of it: Like that wicked Prince, that said, *He would lose his Part in Paradise rather than in Paris*. Art thou poor, why not exercise grace in that condition? Art thou contented, diligent? May be instead of contentment, thou repinest; canst not see a fair lace on thy rich brother's cloth, but grudge it, instead of concurring with Providence by diligence to supply thy wants: Thou art ready to break through the hedge into thy neighbours fat pasture, thus serving thy own turn by a sin, rather than waiting for God's blessing on thy honest diligence; if so, be not angry we call thee by thy right name, or at least question whether we may style thee Christian, whose carriage is so cross to that sacred name, which is too holy to be written on a rotten post.

*Use 4.* Be exhorted, O ye Saints of God, to walk in the exercise of grace. It is the Minister's duty with the continual breath of exhortation, and if need be, reproof, to keep this heavenly fire clear on the Saint's altar. *Peter* saw it necessary to have bellows always in his hands, *2 Pet. i. 12. I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of those things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth;* (that shall not take him off) as long as he is in this tabernacle, he saith he will stir them up, and be putting them in remembrance,

*brance*, v. 13. There is a sleepy disease we are subject to in this life; Christ, though he had roused up his Disciples twice, yet takes them napping the third time. Either exercise thy grace, or Satan will act thy corruption, as one bucket goes down, the other riseth; there is a body of sin within, which like a malignant party watcheth for such a time to step into the saddle, and 'tis easier to keep them down, than to pull them down. Thy time is short, and thy way long, thou hadst best put on, lest thou meanest to be overtaken with night, before thou gettest within sight of thy Father's house. How uncomfortable 'tis for a traveller in Heaven's-Road (above all other) to stumble in the dark, many can with aching hearts tell thee. And what hast thou here to mind like this? Are they worldly cares and pleasures? Is it wisdom to lay out so much cost on thy tenement, which thou art leaving, and forget what thou must carry with thee? Before the fruit of these be ripe which thou art now planting, thyself may be rotting in the grave: *Time is short*, saith the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* vii. 29. The world is near its port, and therefore God hath contracted the sails of man's life but awhile, and there will not be a point to chuse whether we had wives or not, riches or not, but there will be a vast difference between those that had grace, and those that had not; yea, between those that did drive a quick trade in the exercise thereof, and those that were more remiss; the one shall have an *abundant entrance into glory*, 2 *Pet.* i. 11. while the other shall suffer loss in much of his lading, which shall be cast over-board as merchandise that will bear no price in that heavenly country; yea, while thou art here, others shall fare the better by thy lively graces. Thy cheerfulness and activity in thy heavenly course will tell others that travel with thee; he is dull indeed that will not put on, when he sees so much metal for God, in thee who leadeest the way. Yea, thy grace will give a check to the sins of others, who never stand in such awe, as when grace comes forth and sits like a ruler in the gate, to be seen of all that pass by. The swearer knows not such majesty is present, when the Christian is mealy-mouthed, and so goes on and fears no colours, whose grace has had but her dagger of zeal ready, and courage to draw it forth in a wise reproof, would make sin quit the place, and with shame run into its hole, *Job* xxix. 8. *The young men saw me and hid themselves, the Princes refrained talking and laid their hands*

*hand on their mouth.* And doth not God deserve the best service thou canst do him in thy generation? Did he give thee grace to lay it up in a dead stock, and none to be the better? or can you say, that he is wanting to you in his love and mercy? Are they not ever in exercise for your good? Is the eye of providence ever shut? No, he slumbers not that keeps thee: Or is it one moment off thee? No, the eye of the Lord is upon the righteous; he hath fixed it for ever, and with infinite delight pleaseth himself in the object. When was his ear shut against thy cries, or his hands from supplying thy wants? nay, doth not thy condition take up the thoughts of God, and are they any other than thoughts of peace which he entertains? A few drops of this oil will keep the wheel in motion.

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*That ye may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil.*

THESE words present us with the reason, why the Christian soldier is to be thus completely armed, *That he may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.* The strength of which argument lies in these two particulars.

First, The danger, if unarmed: the enemy is no mean contemptible one, no less than the Devil, set out as a cunning engineer by his wiles and stratagems.

Secondly, The certainty of standing against all his wits and wiles, if we be thus armed, *That ye may be able to stand.* As no standing without armour, so no fear of falling into the fiends hands if armed.

To begin with the first, the Saints enemy, the Devil described by his wiles, properly the methods of Satan, which signifies, that art and order one observes in handling a point; we say such a one is methodical; because it shows ingenuity and acuteness of wit so to compose a discourse; therefore it is transferred to express the subtilty of Satan in laying his plots and stratagems, in his warlike preparations against the Christian.

Indeed

Indeed the expert soldier hath his order as well the scholar there is method in forming of an army, as well as framing an argument. The note which lies before us is,

*Doct.* The Devil is a very subtle enemy. The Christian is endangered most by his policy and craft; he is called the old Serpent. The serpent, subtle above other creatures, an old serpent above other serpents: Satan was too crafty for man in his perfection, much more now in his maimed estate, having never recovered that first crack he got in his understanding by the fall of *Adam*. And as man hath lost, so Satan hath gained more and more experience; he lost his wisdom indeed as soon as he became a Devil, but ever since he hath increased his craft; though he hath wisdom enough to do himself good, yet subtilty enough to do others hurt. God shews us where his strength lies, when he promiseth he will *bruise the head of the serpent*; his head crushed and he dies presently. Now in handling this point of Satan's subtilty, we shall consider him in his two main designs, and therein shew you his wiles and policies. His first main design is, to draw into sin. The second is to accuse, vex, and trouble the Saint for sin. First, Let us consider the Devil as a tempter to sin, and there he shows his subtilty in three things.

First, In chusing the most advantageous seasons for tempting.

Secondly, In managing his temptations; laying them in such a method and form, as shews his craft.

Thirdly, In pitching on fit instruments for his turn, to carry on his design.

CHAP. I

*Of Satan's Subtilty to chuse out the most advantageous seasons for tempting.*

**F**IRST he shews his subtilty, in chusing the most proper and advantageous seasons for tempting. *To every thing there is a season, Solomon saith, Eccles. iii. 1.* that is, a nick of time, which taken, gives facility and speedy dispatch to a business: And therefore the same wise man gives this reason, why man miscarries so frequently, and is disappointed in his enterprizes, *because he knows not his time, Eccl. ix 11.* he comes when the bird is flown. A hundred soldiers at one time may turn a battle, or save an army, when thousands will not do it at another.

Satan knows how to make his approaches, when (at any time) he is most likely to be entertained. As *Christ* hath *the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season* of counsel and comfort, to a doubting and drooping spirit, so Satan shews his black heart, and hellish skill, in speaking words of seduction and temptation in season. I shall give you a view of his subtilty in special seasons, which he chuseth to tempt in.

1. The first season he takes to tempt in is, when newly converted. No sooner is the child of grace, the new creature born, but this Dragon pours a flood of temptation after it. He learnt the *Ægyptians* but some of his own craft, when he taught them that cruel baptism, which they exercised upon the *Israelitish* babes, in throwing them into the river as soon as they were born. The first cries of the new creature, give all the legions of Hell an alarm; they are much troubled at it, as *Herod* and *Jerusalem* were, when *Christ* was born; and now they sit in council to take away the life of this new-born King. The Apostles met with opposition, and persecution in their latter days, when endued with large portions of the Spirit; but with more temptations from Satan in the former, when young converts, as you may

observe in the several passages recorded of them,— Satan knew grace within was weak, and their supplies promised at the Spirit's coming, not landed; and when is an enemy more likely to carry the town than in such a low condition? and therefore he tries them all. Indeed the advantages are so many, that we may wonder how the young convert escapes with his life; knowledge weak, and so soon led into an error, especially in divided times; when many ways are held forth, one saying, Here is Christ; another there is Christ, and the Christian ready to think every one means honestly that comes with good words; as a little child that hath lost his way to his father's house, is prone to follow any that offer him their conduct; of experience he knows little; and if *Adam*, whose knowledge was so perfect, was so soon cheated (being assaulted before he was well warm in his new possessions) how much more advantage hath Satan of the new convert? in whom he finds every grace so indisposed to make resistance, both from its own weakness, and the strength of corruption, (which commonly in such is much unmortified) which makes it act with more difficulty and mixture, as in a fire newly kindled, where the smoke is more than the flame; or like beer newly-tunn'd, which runs thick; so that though there appear more strength of affection in such, that it works over into a greater abundance of duty than in others, yet with some dregs of carnal passion, which Satan knows, and therefore chuseth to stir what he sees troubled already.

Secondly, When the Saint is beset with some great affliction, this is some blind lane or solitary place, fit for this thief to call for his purse in. An expert Captain first labours to make a breach in the wall, and then falls on in storming the city. Satan first got power from God to weaken Job in his estate, children, health, and other comforts, and now tempts him to impatience, and what not? To let Christ fast forty days before he comes, and then he falls to his work: As an army stays 'till a castle be pinch'd for provision within, and then sends a parley, never more likely to be embraced than in such straight. A temptation comes strong, when the way to relief seems to lie through the sin that Satan is wooing: When one is poor, and Satan comes, what starve rather than step over the hedge, and steal for thy supply? This is enough to put flesh and blood to the stand.

Thirdly,



Thirdly, When the Christian is about some notable enterprize for God's glory, then Satan will lie like a serpent in the way, *an adder in the path, that biteth his horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.* Thus he stood at *Joshua's* right hand to resist him. The right hand is the working hand, and his standing there implies his desire to hinder him in his enterprize. Indeed the Devil was never a friend to temple-work, and therefore that work is so long a doing. What a handsome excuse doth he help the *Jews* unto, *The Time is not come*; God's time was come, but not the Devil's, and therefore he helps them to this poor shift, perverting the sense of Providence as if it were not time, because they were so poor; whereas they thrive no better, because they went no sooner about the work, as God tells them. *Paul* and *Barnabas* had a holy design in their thoughts to go visit the brethren in every city, and strengthen their faith; the Devil knew what a blow this might give to his kingdom; their visiting might hinder him in his circuit, and he stirs up an unhappy difference between these two holy men, who grow so hot that they parted in this storm, *Acts* xv. 30. There were two remarkable periods of Christ's life, his entrance into his public ministry at his baptism, and his finishing it at his passion; and at both we have the Devil fiercely encountering him. The more public thy place, Christian, and the more eminent thy service for God, the more thou must expect the Devil will have some more dangerous design or other against thee; therefore if every private soldier needs armour against Satan's bullets of temptation, then the commanders and officers who stand in the front of battle, much more.

Fourthly, When he hath the presence of an object to enforce his temptation. Thus he takes *Eve* when she is near the tree, and had it in her eye while he should make the motion, that assaulting two ports at once, it might be the harder for her to hinder the landing of his temptation; and if *Eve's* eyes so soon affected her heart with an inordinate desire, then how much more now is it easy for him by the presence of the object, to excite and actuate that lust, which lies dormant in the heart. As *Naomi* sent her daughter to lie at *Boaz's* feet, knowing well, if he endured her there, there were hope that he might take her into his bed at last: If the Christian can let the object come so near, Satan will promise himself his suit may in time be granted. Therefore  
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it should be our care, if we would not yield to the sin, not to walk by, or sit at the door of the occasion: Look not on that beauty with a wandering eye, by which thou wouldest not be taken prisoner; parley not with that in thy thoughts, which thou meanest not to let into thy heart; conversation begets affection; some by this have brought to marry those whom at first sight they thought they could not have liked.

Fifthly, After great manifestations of God's love, then the tempter comes. Such is the weak constitution of grace, that it can neither well bear smiles nor frowns from God without a snare: As one said of our *English* nation, *Totam nec pati potest libertatem nec servitatem*; it cannot well bear liberty nor bondage in the height: So neither can the soul; if God smile and opens himself a little familiarly to us, then we are prone to grow too high and wanton; if he frown, then we sink in our faith; thus the one, like fair weather, brings up the seeds of corruption; and the other, like sharp frosts, nip and kill the flowers of grace: The Christian is in danger on both hands, therefore Satan takes this advantage, when the Christian is flush of comfort, even as a cheat who falls in with some young heir, when he hath newly received his rents, and never leaves till he hath eased him of his money; thus Satan lies upon a catch, to inveigle a Saint into one sin or other, which he knows will soon leak out his joy. Had ever any a larger testimony from Heaven than *Peter*, Matth. xvi. 17. Where Christ pronounceth him blessed, and puts a singular honour upon him, making him the representative for all his Saints. No doubt this favour to *Peter* stirred up the envious Spirit sooner to fall upon him. If *Joseph's* party-coloured coat made the Patriarchs to plot against him, no wonder malice should prompt Satan to shew his spite, where Christ had set such a mark of love and honour; and therefore we find him soon at *Peter's* elbow, making him his instrument to tempt his master, who soon espied his cloven foot, and rebukes *Peter* with a *Get thee behind me, Satan*. He that seemed a rock even now, through Satan's policy, is laid a stone of offence for Christ to stumble at. So *David*, when he had received such wonderful mercies, settled in his throne with the ruin of his enemies, yea, pardoned for his bloody sin, now ready to lay down his head with peace in the dust; Satan steps in to cloud his clear evening, and tempts him to number the people:

ple ; so ambitious is Satan to throw the Saint into the mire of sin, when his coat is cleanest.

Sixthly, At the hour of death, when the Saint is down and his bodily strength low, this coward falls upon him ; 'tis the last cast indeed he hath for the game. They say of the natural serpent, that he never is seen at his length till dying ; so this mystical serpent never strains his wits and wiles more, than when his time is thus short. The Saint is even stepping into eternity, and now he treads upon his heel, which if he cannot trip up, so as to hinder his arrival in Heaven, yet bruise it, that he may go with pain thither.

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## CHAP. II.

*Satan's Subtilty in managing his Temptations ; where several stratagems used by him to deceive the Christian, are laid down.*

**T**HE second way wherein Satan shews his tempting subtilty, is, in the stratagems he useth to deceive the Christian in the act of temptation.

First, He hangs out false colours, and comes up to the Christian in the disguise of a friend, so that the gates are opened to him, and his motions received with applause, before either be discovered ; therefore he is said to *transform himself into an Angel of light*, 2 Cor. xi. 14. Of all plots 'tis most dangerous when he appears in *Samuel's* mantle, and silvers his foul tongue with fair language. Thus in point of error, he corrupts some in their judgment by commending his notions for special gospel-truths, and like a cunning chapman, puts off his old ware (errors I mean that have laid long upon his hand) only turning them a little after the mode of the times, and they go for new light ; under the skirt of Christian liberty, he conveys in libertinism ; by cry-

ing up the spirit, he decries and vilifies the scripture; by magnifying faith, he labours to undermine repentance, and blow up good works; by bewailing the corruption of the church in its administration, he draws unstable souls from it, and amusethe them, till at last they fall into a vertigo, and can see no church at all in being. And he prevails no less on the hearts and lives of men by this wile, than on their judgments. Under the notion of zeal, he kindles sometimes a dangerous flame of passion and wrath in the heart, which like a rash fire makes the Christian's spirit boil over into unchristian desires of, and prayers for revenge where he should forgive, of which we have an instance in the Disciples, *Luke ix. 55.* where two holy men are desiring that *fire may come down from Heaven.* Little did they think from whence they had their coal that did so heat them, till Christ told them, *Ye know not what spirit ye are of.* Sometimes he pretends pity and natural affection, which in some cases may be good counsel, and all the while he desires to promote cowardice and sinful self-love, whereby the Christian may be brought to fly from his colours, shrink from the truth, or decline some necessary duty of his calling; this wile Christ soon spied, when he got *Peter* to be his spokesman, saying, *Master, pity thyself;* who stopt his mouth with that sharp rebuke, *Get thee behind me Satan.* O what need have we to study the scriptures, our hearts, and Satan's wiles, that we may not bid this enemy welcome, and all the while think it is Christ that is our guest.

A second policy he useth is, to get intelligence of the Saint's affairs. This is one great wheel in the politician's clock, to have spies in all places, by whom they are acquainted with the counsels and motions of their enemies, and this gives them advantage to disappoint their designs, and more safely to compass their own. 'Tis no hard matter for him to play his game well that sees his enemy's hand. *David* knew how the squares went at Court, *Jonathan's* arrows carried him the news, and accordingly he removed his quarters, and was too hard for his great enemy *Saul.* Satan is the greatest intelligencer in the world, he makes it his business to inquire into the inclinations, thoughts, affections, purposes of the creature, that finding which humour abounds, he may apply himself accordingly, which way the stream goes, that he may open the passage of temptation, and cut the channel to the fall of the creature's affections, and not to force  
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it against the torrent of nature. Now if we consider but the piercing apprehension of the angelical nature, how quick he is to take the scent, which way the game goes, by a word dropt; the cast of an eye, or such a small matter (signal enough to give him the alarm) his experience in heart-anatomy, having inspected, and (as it were) directed so many in his long practice, whereby his knowledge is much perfected, as also his great diligence to add to both these, being as close a student as ever, considering the Saints, and studying how much he may do them a mischief, as we see in *Job's* case, whom he had so observed, that he was able to give an answer extempore to God, what *Job's* state and present posture was, and what might be the most probable means of obtaining his will of him; and besides all this, the correspondence that he hath with those in and about the Christian; from whom he learns much of his state, as *David* by *Hushai* in *Absalom's* council; all these considered, 'tis almost impossible for the creature to stir out of the closet of his heart, but it will be known whither he inclines; some corrupt passion or other will betray the soul to him, as they did *David* to *Saul*, who told him where he might find him, in the wilderness of *Engedi*, 1 Sam. xxiv. 1. Thus will these give intelligence to Satan; and say, if thou wouldest surprise such a one, he is gone that way, you shall have him in the wood of worldly employments, over head and ears in the desires and cares of this life; see where another sits under such a bower, delighting himself in this child, or that gift, endowment of mind, or the like; lay but the lime-twig there, and you shall soon have him in it. Now Satan having this intelligence, lets him alone to act his part; he sure cannot be at a loss himself, when his scholars (the Jesuits I mean) have such agility of mind, to wreath and cast themselves into any form becoming the persons they would seduce. Is ambition the lust the heart favours? O the pleasing projects that he will put such upon! How easily, having first blown them up with vain hopes, doth he draw them into horrid sins? Thus *Haman*, that he may have a monopoly of his Prince's favour, is hurried into that bloody plot (fatal at last to himself) against the *Jews*. Is uncleanness the lust after which the creature's eye wanders? Now he will be the pander, to bring him and his minion together. Thus he finding *Annon* sick of this disease, sends *Jonadab*, a deep-pated fellow, 2 Sam.

xiii. 3. to put this fine device into his head of feigning himself sick, whereby his sister fell into his snare.

Thirdly, in his gradual approaches to the soul. When he comes to tempt, he is modest, and asks but little; he knows he may get that at many times, which he should be denied if he asked all at once. A few are let into a city, when an army coming in a body would be shut out, and therefore that he may beget no suspicion, he presents a few general propositions, which do not discover the depth of this plot; these, like scouts, go before, while his whole body lies hid, as it were, in some swamp at hand. Thus he wriggled into *Eve's* bosom, whom he doth not at first bid take and eat; no, he is more mannerly than so; this would have been so hideous, that as the fish with some sudden noise, by a stone cast into the river, is scared from the bait, so would she have been affrighted from holding parley with such a one; no, he propounds a question which shall make way for this, *Hath God said? Art not thou mistaken? Could this be his meaning whose bounty lets thee eat of the rest, to deny thee the best of all? Thus he digs about, and loosens the roots of her faith, and then the tree falls the easier the next gust of temptation. This is a dangerous policy indeed. Many have yielded to go a mile with Satan that never intended to go two; but when once on the way, have been allured further, till at last they knew not how to leave his company. Thus Satan leads poor creatures down into the depths of sin by winding stairs, that let them not see the bottom whither they are going: First, he presents an object that occasions some thoughts, these set fire on the affections, and these fume up into the brain, and cloud the understanding, which being thus disabled, now Satan dares a little more declare himself, and boldly solicit the creature to that it would even now have defied. Many who at this day live in open profaneness, never thought they should have rolled so far from their profession, but Satan beguiled them, poor souls, with their modest beginnings. O Christians, give not place to Satan, no not an inch in his first motions; he that is a beggar, and a modest one without doors, will command the house if let in; yield at first, and thou givest away thy strength to resist him in the rest; when the hem is worn, the whole garment will ravel out, if that be not mended by timely repentance.*

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The fourth way, wherein Satan shews his subtilty in managing his temptations, is in his reserves. A wise Captain hath ever some fresh troops at hand to fall on at a pinch, when the other are worsted. Satan is seldom at a loss in this respect; when one temptation is beat back, he soon hath another to fill up the gap, and make good the line. Thus he tempts Christ to diffidence and distrust, by bidding him turn stones into bread, as if it were time now to carve for himself, being so long neglected of his father, as to fast forty days, and no supplies heard of; no sooner had Christ quench'd this dart with that, *It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,* Matt. iv. 4, 5. but he had another on the string which he let fly at him, tempting him to presumption, v. 5. *Then the Devil taketh and sets him on a pinnacle, and says, Cast thyself down headlong, for it is written, He shall give his Angels charge over thee,* &c. As if he had said, If thou hast such confidence in God and his word, as thou pretendest, shew it by casting thyself down, for thou hast a word between thee and the ground, if thou darest trust God: and truly, though Christ had his answer ready, and was prepared to receive his charge on the right hand and on the left, being so completely armed, that no temptation could come amiss; yet note we, Satan's temptations on Christ, were like the serpent's motion on a rock (of which Solomon speaks) that makes no impression, no dent at all, Prov. xxx. 19. But on us they are as a serpent on sand or dust, that leaves a print, when not in the heart, yet in the fancy, colours that which is next door to it, and so the object there is ready to slip in, if great care be not observed, especially when he doth thus change his hands, as when we have resisted one way, fall on afresh another, yea, plants his succeeding temptation upon our very resistance in the former. Now it requires some readiness in our postures, and skill at all our weapons to make our defence, like a disputant, when he is out of his road, and hath a new question started, or argument unusually brought, now he is tried to purpose. And truly this is Satan's way when he tempts the Christian to neglect the duties of God's worship from his worldly occasions, the multitude of them, or necessity of following them, this takes not, then he is on the other side, and is drawing the Christian to the neglect of his worldly calling, out of a seeming zeal to promote his other

in the worship of God. Or first, he comes and labours to deaden the heart in duty, but the Christian is too watchful for him there; then he is puffing of him up with an opinion of his enlargement in it, and always he keeps his sliest and most subtle temptations for the last.

Fifthly, In his political retreats. You shall have an enemy flee as overcome, when it is on a design of overcoming; this was *Joshua's* wile, by which he catched the men of *Ai Josh. iii. 1.* We read not of Satan's being cast out, but of the *unclean spirit's going out* (voluntarily) yet with a purpose to come again, and bring worse company with him, *Matt. xxii. 43.* Satan is not always beat back by the dint and power of conquering grace, but sometimes he draws off, and raiseth his own seige, the more handsomely to get the Christian out of his trenches, that so he may snap him on the plains, whom he cannot come at in his works and fortifications. Temptations send the Saint to his castle, as the sight of the dog doth the coney to her burrough; Now the soul walks the rounds, stands upon its guard, dares not neglect duty, because the enemy is under its very walls, shooting in his temptations continually; but when Satan seems to give the soul over, and the Christian finds he is not haunted with such motions, as formerly, truly now he is prone to remit in his diligence, fail in his duty, and grow either remiss or formal therein; as the *Romans*, whose valour decayed for want of the *Carthaginian* troops to alarm them; let Satan tempt, or no, assault or retreat, keep thou in order, stand in a fighting posture, let his flight strengthen thy faith, but not weaken thy care. The *Parthians* do their enemies most hurt in their flight, shooting their darts as they run, and so may Satan do thee, if thy seeming victory makes thee secure.



## CHAP. III.

*Of Satan's Subtilty in chusing Instruments fit for his Turn to carry on his tempting Design.*

THE third particular in which Satan shews his subtilty as a tempter, is in the choice of the instruments he useth for the carrying on this his design; he, as the master-workman, cuts out the temptation, and gives it the shape, but sometimes he hath his journeymen to make it up; he knows his work may be carried on better by others, when he appears not above-board himself. Indeed there is not such a suitability between the angelical nature and man's, as there is between one man and another; and therefore he cannot make his approaches so familiarly to us, as man can do to man; and here (as in other things) he is God's ape. You know this very reason was given why the *Israelites* desired God might not speak to them, but *Moses*, and God liked the motion; *They have well said*, saith God, *I will raise up a Prophet from the midst of them like unto thee*, Deut. xviii. 17. Thus Satan, he useth the ministry of men like ourselves, by which, as he becomes more familiar, so he is less suspected, while *Joab* like, he gets another to do his errand. Now 'tis not any will serve his turn for this employment, he is very choice in the instruments he pitcheth on: 'Tis not every soldier is fit for an embassy to treat with an enemy, to betray a town, and the like. Satan considers who can do his work to his greatest advantage; and in this he is unlike God, who is not at all choice in his instruments, because he needs none, and is able to do as well with one as another; but Satan's power being finite, he must patch up the defect of the lion's skin with the fox's. Now the persons Satan aims at for his instruments, are chiefly of four sorts.

First, Persons of place and power. Secondly, Persons of parts and policy. Thirdly, Persons of holiness, or at least reputed so. Fourthly, Persons of relation and interest.

First, Satan makes choice of persons of place and power. These are either in the common-wealth or church, if he can, he will secure the throne and the pulpit, as the two forts

that command the line. First, Men of power in the common-wealth; 'tis his old trick to be tampering with such. A Prince, a Ruler, may stand for a thousand; therefore saith *Paul* to *Elymas*, when he would have turned the Deputy from the faith: *O full of all subtilty, thou child of the Devil!* Acts xiii. 8. As if he had said, you have learnt this of your father the Devil, to haunt the courts of Princes, and wind into the favour of great ones. There is a double policy Satan hath, in gaining such to his side. First, none have such advantage to draw others to their way; corrupt the Captain, and it is hard if he bring not off his troop with him. When the Princes, men of renown in their tribes, stood with *Corab*, Numb. xvi. 2, 10. presently a multitude are drawn into the conspiracy. Let *Jeroboam* set up idolatry, and *Israel* is soon in a snare; it is said the people *willingly walked after his commandment*, Hos. v. 11. Secondly, should the sin stay at court, and the infection go no further, yet the sin of such a one (though a good man) may cost a whole kingdom dear, 1 *Chron.* xxi. 1. *Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number the people.* He owed *Israel* spite, and he pays them home in their King's sin, which dropt in a fearful plague upon their heads. Secondly, such as are in place and office in the church. No such way to infect the whole town, as to poison the cistern at which they draw their water. Who shall persuade *Abab* that he may go to *Ramoth Gilead* and fall? Satan can tell: *I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of his Prophets*, 2 *Kings* xxii. 21. How shall the profane be hardened in their sins? Let the Preachers sew pillows under their elbows, and cry peace, peace, and it is done. How may the worship of God come to be neglected? Let *Hophni* and *Phinehas* be but scandalous in their lives, and many both good and bad will *abhor the sacrifice of the Lord.*

Secondly, He employeth persons of parts and policy, if any hath more pregnancy of wit, and depth of reason than another, he is the man Satan looks upon for his service; and so far he prevails, that very few of this rank are found amongst Christ's disciples, *Not many wise.* Indeed God will not have this kingdom, either in the heart, or in the world, maintained by carnal policy; 'tis a gospel-command that we walk in godly simplicity, *sine plicis*; though the serpent can shrink up into his folds, and appear what he is not, yet it doth not become the Saints to juggle or shuffle with God or men;

and

and truly when any of them have made use of the serpent's subtilty, it hath not succeeded; *Jacob* got the blessing by a wile, but he might have had it cheaper with plain dealing. *Abraham* and *Sarah* both dissemble to *Abimelech*, God discovers their sin, and reproveth them for it by the mouth of an Hea-then. *Afa* out of state-policy joins league with *Syria*, yea, pawns the vessels of the sanctuary, and all for help, and what comes of all this? *Herein thou hast done foolishly*, saith God, *from henceforth thou shalt have wars*. Sinful policy shall not long thrive in the Saint's hands, but Satan will not be out of his way, he enquires for the subtillest-pated men, such as *Balaam*, *Ahitophel*, *Haman*, *Sanballat*, men admired for their counsel and deep plots, these are for his turn.—A wicked cause needs a smooth Orator, bad ware a pleasing chapman. The instruments he useth to seduce and corrupt the minds of men, are commonly most subtle-pated, such, *that if it were possible, would deceive the very elect*. This made the Apostle so jealous of the *Corinthians*, whom he had espoused to Christ, lest like *Eve* by the serpent, their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. He must be a cunning Devil indeed, that can draw off the spouse's love from her beloved, yet there is such witchcraft in Satan's instruments, that many have been brought to fly in the face of those truths and ordinances, yea, of Christ himself, to whom they have seemed espoused formerly. Now in three particulars, this sort of Satan's instruments shew their master's subtilty.

First, In aspersing the good name of the sincere Messengers of Christ. 'Tis Satan's old trade to raise his credit upon the ruined reputation of Christ's faithful servants. Thus he taught *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*, to charge *Moses* and *Aaron*, *Ye take too much upon you, seeing the congregation is holy*, Numb. xvi. xvi. 3, 16. They would make the people believe, that it was the pride of their heart, to claim a monopoly to to themselves, as if none but *Aaron* and his fraternity, were holy enough to offer incense, and by this subtle practice they seduced (for a while) in a manner, the whole congregation to their side. So the lying Prophets (that were Satan's Knights of the post to *Abab*) fell foul on good *Micaiah*. Our Saviour himself was no better handled by the Pharisees and their confederates: and *Paul*, the chief of the Apostles, had his Ministry undermined, and his reputation biased by  
false

false teachers, as if he had been some weak sorry preacher, 2 Cor. x. 10. *His bodily presence is weak, say they, and his speech contemptible*; and is this your admired man?

Secondly, In covering their impostures and errors with choice notions, and excellent truths. Arius himself, and other dangerous instruments of Satan, were too wise to stuff their discourses with nothing but heterodox matter; precious truths dropt from them, with which they sprinkled their corrupt principles, yet with such art as should not easily be discerned. This (as one observes) our Saviour warns his disciples of, when he bids them *beware of the leaven of the Pharisees* (that is, of their errors.) But why leaven? For the secret mixture of it with the wholesome bread; you do not make your bread all of leaven, none would then eat it, but crumble a little into a whole batch, which sours all. Thus Christ doth tell the Disciples, that the Pharisees among many truth, mix their errors, and therefore it behoves them to beware, lest with the truth the error goes down also. Again, leaven is very like the dough, of the same grain, only differs in age and sourness; thus Christ intimates their errors to the truth, scraped, as it were, out of the scriptures, but soured with their false glosses. This indeed makes it easy for Christ's sheep to be infected with the scab of error, because that weed which breeds the rot, is so like the grace that nourisheth them.

Thirdly; Their subtilty, appears in holding forth such principles as are indulgent to the flesh. This brings whole shoals of silly souls into their net, the heart of man loves to shape a religion according to his own humour, and is easy to believe that to be a truth which favours its own inclination. Now there are three lusts that Satan's instruments labour to gratify in their doctrine, Carnal reason, pride, and fleshly liberty.

First, Carnal reason; this is the great Idol which the more intelligent part of the world worship, making it the very standard of their faith, and from this bitter root, have sprung those Arian and Socinian heresies. He that will go no further than reason will carry him, may hold out in the plain way of the moral law, but when he comes to the depths of the gospel, must either go back, or be content that faith should help reason over.

Secondly,

Secondly, Another lust that Satan nourisheth, is pride. Man naturally would be a God to himself (though by clambering so high he got his fall) and whatever doctrine nourisheth a good opinion of man in his own eye, this is acceptable to him, and this hath spawned another fry of dangerous errors. The Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian, which set nature upon its own legs, and persuade man he can go alone to Christ, or at least with a little external help, of an hand to lead, or argument to excite, without any creating work in the soul. O, we cannot conceive how smoothly such stuff goes down. If one workman should tell you your House is rotten, and must be pulled down, and all new materials prepared; and another should say no such matter, such a beam is good, and such a spar may stand, a little cost will serve the turn: It were no wonder that you should listen to him that would put you to least cost and trouble: The faithful servants of Christ tell sinners from the word, that man in his natural state is corrupt and rotten, that nothing of the old frame will serve, and there must needs be all new; but in comes the Arminian, and blows up the sinner's pride, and tells him he is not so weak or wicked as the other represents him; if thou wilt thou mayest repent and believe; or at least by exerting thy natural abilities, oblige God to super-add what thou hast not. This is the workman that will please proud men best.

Thirdly, Satan by his instruments nourisheth that desire of fleshly liberty, which is in man by nature, who is a son of *Belial*, without yoke; and if he must wear any, that will please best, which hath the softest lining, and pincheth the flesh least; and therefore when the sincere teachers of the word will not abate the strictness of the command, but press sincere obedience to it, then come Satan's instruments, and say, these are hard task-masters, who will not allow one play-day in a year to the Christian, but tie him to continual duty, we will shew you an easier way to Heaven: Come, saith the Papist, confess but once a year to the Priest, (pay him well for his pains) and be an obedient son of the church, and we will dispense with all the rest. Come, saith the Familist, the gospel-charter allows more liberty than these legal preachers tell you of; they bid you repent and believe when Christ hath done all these to your hand, what have you left to do but to nourish the flesh? Something sure is in it, that impostors find such quick return for their ware, while truth

hangs upon the log ; and is it not this ; that they are content to afford Heaven cheaper to their disciples, than Christ will to his. He that sells cheapest shall have the most customers, though at last the best will be the cheapest : Truth with self-denial, a better pennyworth, than error with all its flesh-pleasing.

Fourthly, Satan makes choice of such as have a great name for holiness ; none but a live bird to draw others into the net ; but is it possible that such should do this work for the Devil ? Yes, such is the policy of Satan, and the frailty of the best, that the most holy men have been his instrument to seduce others. *Abraham* tempts his wife to lie, *Say thou art my sister*. The old Prophet leads the man of God out of his way, *1 Kings* xiii. The holiness of the man, and the reverence of his age, gave authority to his counsel. O how should this make you watchful, whose long travel and great progress in the ways of God have gained you a name of eminence in the church, what you say, do, or hold, because you are file-leading men, and others look more on you than their way !

Fifthly, Satan chuseth such, as by relation or affection have deep interest in the persons he would gain. Some will kiss the child for the nurse's sake, and like the present for the hand that brings it. Doubtless *David* would not have received that from *Nabal*, which he took from *Abigail*, and thanked her. Satan sent the apple by *Eve's* hand to *Adam*. *Delilah* doth more with *Samson*, than all the *Philistine* bands. *Job's* wife brings him the poison, *curse God and die*. Some think Satan spared her life, when he slew his children and servants (though she was also within his commission) as the most likely instrument, by reason of her relation and his affection, to lead him into temptation. Satan employs *Peter* the disciple to tempt Christ ; at another time his friends and kinsfolk. Some martyrs have confessed, the hardest work they met withal, was to overcome the prayers and tears of their friends and relations ; *Paul* himself could not get off this snare without heart-breaking, *What mean you to weep, and to break my heart ?* *Acts* xvi. 13.

CHAP. IV.

*Wherein this Point of Satan's Subtilty, as a Tempter to Sin, is briefly applied.*

*Use.* **F**IRST, affect not sinful policy and subtilty, it makes you but like the Devil. There is the wisdom of the Serpent, which is commended, and that is his perfection as a creature, in which both the literal and the mystical excel, the one in an ingenious observing nature, above the beasts of the field ; and the other in knowledge, as an angel above men ; but as the subtilty of the one, and the knowledge of the other is degenerate, and makes them more able to do mischief, the one to the bodies, the other to the souls of men ; this kind of wisdom and subtilty is to be abhorred by us : *The Serpent's eye* (as one saith) *does well only in the Dove's head.*

First, Affect not subtilty in contriving any sin. Some are *wise to do evil*, Jer. iv. 22. Masters of this craft, who can as they lie on their beds, cast their wicked designs into an artificial method, shewing a kind of devilish wit therein, as the *Egyptians*, who dealt wisely (as they thought) with the *Israelites*, and *Jezebel*, who had printed her bloody design in so fair a letter, that some might read her saint, while she was playing the devil. This is the black art indeed, and will make the soul as black as Hell that practices it. It is not hard for any (though a fool) to learn. Be but wicked, and the Devil will help thee to be witty : Come but a while to his school, and thou mayest soon be a cunning man. No sins speak a higher attainment in wickedness, than those which are the result of deliberate counsel and deep plottings. Creatures as they go longer with their young, so their birth is more strong and perfect ; as the elephant above all others. The longer sin is forming and forging within, and the oftener the head and heart meet about it, the completer the sin. Here are many litters of unformed sin in one ; such I mean, that are conceived and cast forth in the

hurry of an extemporary passion ; such sudden acts shew weakness, these other, deep wickedness.

Secondly, Take heed of hiding sin when thou hast committed it. This is one of the devices that are in man's heart, and as much art and cunning is shewn in this, as in any one part of the sinners trade. What a trick had the Patriarchs to blind their father's eye with a bloody coat? *Joseph's* mistress, to prevent a charge from *Joseph*, accused him for what she was guilty, like the robber who escaped by crying out *Stop thief*. God taught man to make coats to cover his naked body, but the Devil learned him to weave these coverings to hide the nakedness of his soul ; the more subtil thou seemest in concealing thy sin, the more egregiously thou playest the fool. None so shamed as the liar when found out, and that thou art sure to be. Thy covering is too short to hide thee from God's eye, and what God sees (if thou dost not put thyself to shame) he will tell all the world of hereafter, however thou escape in this life.

Thirdly, Take heed of subtilty and sinful policy, in compassing that which is lawful in itself : 'Tis lawful to improve thy estate, and husband it well for thy posterity ; but take not the Devil's counsel, who will be putting thee upon some tricks in thy trade, and slights in thy dealing ; such may go for wise men for a while, but the prophet reads their destiny, *Jer. xvi. 11. At his end he shall be a fool.* 'Tis lawful to love our estate, life, liberty, but beware of sinful policy to save them. 'Tis no wisdom to shuffle with God, by denying his truth, or shifting off our duty to keep correspondence with men ; he is a weak fencer that lays his soul at open guard to be stabbed and wounded with guilt, while he is lifting up his hands to save a broken head. Our fear commonly meets us at that door by which we think to run from it. *He that will save his life shall lose it.* As you love your peace, Christians, be plain hearted with God ; and man and keep the King's highway ; go the plain way of the command to obtain thy desire, and not to leap over hedge and ditch to come a little sooner to the journey's end ; such commonly either meet with some stop, that makes them come back with shame, or else venture their necks in some desperate leap. He is sure to come safer (if not sooner) home, that is willing to go a little about to keep God's company. The Historian's observation is worth the Christian's remembrance : " *Con-*  
silia



silia callida prima specie læta, tractatu dura, eventu tristia, Liv. Crafty counsels promise fair at first, but prove difficult more in the managing, and in the end do pay the undertaker home with desperate sorrow.

*Use 2.* Is Satan so subtle? O then think not to be too cunning for the Devil, he will be too hard for thee at last; sin not with thoughts of an after repentance; it is possible thou meanest this at present: but dost thou think who sits down to play with this cheat, to draw out thy stock when thou pleasest? Alas! poor wretch he has a thousand devices to carry thee on, and engage thee deeper, till he hath not left thee any tenderness in thy conscience, as some have been served at play, intending only to venture a shilling or two, yet have, by the secret witchery in gaming, played the very clothes off their back before they had done: O how many have thus sinned away all their principles, yea, profession itself, that they have not so much as this cloak left, but walk naked to their shame? Like children who get into a boat, think to play near the shore, but are unawares by a violent gust carried down to the wide sea. O how know you that dally with Satan, but that at last you may, (who begin modestly) be carried down to the broad sea of profaneness? Some men are so subtle to over-reach, and so cruel when they get men into their hand, that a man had better beg his bread than borrow of them. Such a merchant is Satan, cunning to insinuate, and get the creature into his books, and when he hath him on the hip, no more mercy to be had at his hand, than the lamb may expect from the ravenous wolf.

*Use 3.* Study his wiles, and acquaint thyself with Satan's policy. *Paul* takes it for granted, that every Saint doth in some measure understand them; *We are not ignorant of his devices*, 2 Cor. ii. 11. He is but an ill fencer that knows and observes nothing of his enemy's play; many particular stratagems I have laid down already which may help a little; and for thy direction in this study of, and enquiry into Satan's wiles, take this threefold counsel.

First, Take God into thy counsel: Heaven overlooks Hell. God at any time can tell thee what plots are hatching there against thee. Consider Satan as he is God's creature, so God cannot but know him. He that makes the watch, knows very pin in it.—He formed this crooked Serpent, though not the crookedness of this Serpent; and though Satan's way in tempting be as wonderful as the way of a serpen

pent on a rock, yet God traceth him; yea, knows all his thoughts together. *Hell itself is naked before him*, and the destroyer hath no covering. Again, consider him as God's prisoner, who hath him fast in chains; and so the Lord, who is his keeper, must needs know whither his prisoner goes, who cannot stir without his leave. Lastly, consider him as his messenger; for so he is. *An evil spirit from the Lord vexed Saul*; and he that gives him his errand, is able to tell thee what it is. Go then and plow with God's heifer; improve thy interest in Christ, who knows what his Father knows, and is ready to reveal all that concerns thee, to thee, *John xv. 15*. It was he who described the Devil coming against *Peter* and the rest of the Apostles, and faithfully revealed it to them, *Luke xxii.* before they thought of any such matter. Thro' Christ's hands pass all that is transacted in Heaven and Hell. We live in days of great actions, deep counsels, and plots on all sides, and only a few that stand on the upper end of the world know these mysteries of state, all the rest know little more than pamphlet intelligence; Thus it is in regard of those plots which Satan in his infernal conclave is laying against the souls of men, they are but a few that know any thing to purpose of Satan's design against them; and those are the Saints from whom God cannot hide his own counsels of love, but sends his spirit to reveal unto them here, what he hath prepared for them in Heaven, *1 Cor. ii. 10.* and therefore much less will he conceal any destructive plot of Satan from them.

2 Be intimately acquainted, and thou wilt the better know his design against thee, who takes his method of tempting, from the inclination and posture of thy heart. As a General walks about the city, and views it well, and then raiseth his batteries, where he hath the greatest advantage: so doth Satan compass, and consider the Christian in every part before he tempts.

Lastly, Be careful to read the word of God with observation. In it thou hast the history of the most remarkable battles that have been fought by the most eminent worthies in Christ's army of Saints, with the great warrior Satan. Here thou mayest see how Satan hath foiled them, and how they have recovered their lost ground. Here you have his cabinet-councils opened. There is not a lust which you are in danger of, but you have it described, not a temptation which the word doth not arm you against. It is reported that

a certain Jew should have poisoned *Luther*, but was happily prevented by his picture that was sent to *Luther*, with a warning from a faithful friend, to take heed of such a man when he saw him, by which he knew the murderer and escaped his hands. The word shews thee, O Christian, the face of those lusts, which Satan employs to butcher thy precious soul; *By them is thy servant warned*, saith *David*. Psal. xix. 11.

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## CHAP. V.

*Wherein is shewn the Subtilty of Satan, as a Troubler and an Accuser for Sin; where many of his Wiles and Policies to disquiet the Saints Spirits are discovered.*

THE second general in which Satan appears such a subtle enemy is, in molesting the Saints peace, and disquieting the Saints spirit. As the holy spirit's work is not to be a sanctifier, but also a comforter, whose fruits are righteousness and peace; so the evil spirit Satan is both a seducer unto sin, and an accuser for sin, a tempter and a troubler, and indeed in the same order. As the holy Ghost is first a sanctifier, and then a comforter; so Satan first a tempter, then a troubler. *Joseph's* mistress first tries to draw him to gratify her lust; that string breaking, she had another to trounce him, and for a plea, she hath his coat to cover her malice, nor is it hard for Satan to pick some hole in the Saints coat, when he walks most circumspectly. The proper seat of sin, is the will; of comfort, the conscience; Satan hath not absolute knowledge of, or power over these (being locked up from any other but God) and therefore what he doth, either in defiling temptations, or disquieting, is by wiles more than by open force, and he is not inferior in troubling himself in tempting. Satan hath, as the Serpent, a way by himself; other beasts, their motion is

is direct, right on, but the Serpent goes askew as we say, winding, and wreathing its body, that when you see a serpent creeping along, you can hardly discern which way it tends; thus Satan in his vexing temptations hath many intricate policies, turning this way and that way, the better to conceal his designs from the Saint, which will appear in these following methods.

## SECT. I.

First, He vexeth the Christian by laying his brats at the Saint's door, and charging him with that which is his own creature; and here he hath such a notable art, that many dear Saints of God are woefully hampered, and dejected, as if they were the vilest blasphemers, and atheists in the world; whereas indeed the cup is of his own putting into the sack, but so slyly conveyed into the Saint's bosom, that tho' the Christian is amazed and frightened at the sight of them, yet being jealous of his own heart, and unacquainted with Satan's tricks of this kind, cannot conceive how such motions should come there (if not bred in, and vomited out by his own naughty heart) and so bears the blame of the sin himself, because he cannot find the right father, mourning as one that is forlorn and cast off by God, or else (saith he) I should never have such vermin of Hell creeping in my bosom; and here Satan hath his end he proposeth; for he is not so silly as to hope he should have welcome with such a horrid crew of blasphemous and atheistical thoughts in that soul, where he hath been denied when he came in an enticing way; no, but his design is by the way of revenge; because the soul will not prostitute itself to its lust otherways, therefore to haunt it and scare it with these imps of blasphemy, as he served Luther, to whom he appeared, and when repulsed by him went away, and left a noisome stench behind him in the room. Thus when the Christian had worsted Satan in his most pleasing temptations, being mad, he belched forth this stench of blasphemous motions to annoy and affright him, that from them the Christian may draw some sad conclusion or other; and indeed the Christian's sin lies commonly more in the conclusion, which  
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he draws from them (as that he is not a child of God) than in the motions themselves. All the counsel therefore I shall give thee in this case, is to do with these motions, as you use to serve those vagrants and rogues that come about the country; whom, though you cannot keep from passing through the town, yet you look they settle not there, but whip them and send them to their own home. Thus give these motions the law, in mourning for them, resisting of them, and they shall not be your charge, (yea, 'tis like you shall seldomer be troubled with such guests) but if once you come to entertain them, and be Satan's nurse to them, then the law of God will cast them upon you.

## SECT. II.

Secondly, Another wile of Satan as a troubler, is in aggravating the Saint's sins (against which he hath a notable faculty) not that he hates the sin, but the Saint; now in this, his chief subtilty is so to lay his charge, that it may seem to be the act of the Holy Spirit; he knows an arrow out of God's quiver wounds deep; and therefore when he accuseth, he comes in God's name; as suppose a child were conscious to himself of displeasing his father, and one that owes him a spite (to trouble him) should counterfeit a letter from his father, and cunningly conveys it into the son's hand, who receives it as from his father, wherein he chargeth him with many heavy crimes, disowns him, and threatens he shall never come into his sight, or have a penny of portion from him; the poor son (conscious to himself of many undutiful carriage, and not knowing the plot) takes on heavily, and can neither eat nor sleep for grief, here is a real trouble obtained from a false and imaginary ground: Thus Satan observes how the squares go between God and his children, such a Saint he sees tardy in this duty, faulty in that service, and he knows the Christian is conscious of this, and that the Spirit of God will also shew his distaste for these, both which prompts Satan to draw a charge at length, raking up all the aggravations he can think of, and gives it in to the Saint as sent from God. Thus he taught *Job's* friends to pick up those infirmities, which dropt from him in his distress, and shoot them back in his face, as if indeed they had been sent from God to declare him an hypocrite, and denounce his wrath for the same.

Quest. *But how should we know the false accusation of Satan from the rebukes of God?*

ANSW. First, If they cross any former act or work of the Spirit in thy soul, they are Satan's, and not the Holy Spirit's. Now you shall observe, Satan's scope in accusing the Christian, and aggravating his sin, is to unsaint him, and persuade him he is but an hypocrite. O, saith Satan, now thou hast shewn what thou art, see what a spot is on thy coat, this is not the spot of a child; who ever that was a Saint, committed such a sin after such a sort? All thy comforts and confidence which thou hast boasted of, were false; thus you see Satan at one blow dasheth all in pieces. The whole fabrick of grace, which God hath been rearing up many years in the soul, must now at one puff of his malicious mouth be blown down, and all the sweet comforts with which the the Holy Ghost hath sealed up of God's love, must be defaced with this one blot, which Satan draws over the fair a copy of the Saint's evidence. Well, soul, for thy comfort know, if ever the Spirit of God hath begun a sanctifying or comforting work, causing thee to hope in his mercy, he never is, will, or can be the Messenger to bring contrary news to thy soul, his language is not yea and nay, but *yea* and *amen* for ever. Indeed when the Saint plays the wanton, he can chide, yea, will frown, and tell the soul roundly of its sin, as he did *David* by *Nathan*. *Thou art the man*, this thou hast done, and paints out his sin in such bloody colours, as made *David's* heart melt, as it were into so many drops of water; but that shall not serve, he tells him what a rod is steeping for him, one of his own house, no other than his darling son shall rise up up against him, that he may the more fully conceive how ill God took the sin of him, a child, a Saint; he shall know what it is to have his beloved child traitorously invade his crown, and unnaturally hunt for his precious life; yet not a word all this while is heard from *Nathan* teaching *David* to unsaint himself, and call in question the work of God in his soul. No, he had no such commission from God, he was sent to make him mourn for his sin, not from his sin to question his state which God had so oft put out of doubt.

Secondly, When they asperse the riches of God's grace, and so charge the Christian, that withal they reflect upon the good name of God, when they are not of the Holy Spirit,  
but

but from Satan. When you find your sins so represented and aggravated to you, as exceeding either the mercy of God's nature, or the grace of his covenant, *Hic se aperit Diabolus*; this comes from that foul liar. The Holy Spirit is Christ's spokesman to commend him to souls, and induce sinners to embrace the grace of the gospel, and can such words drop from the sacred lips, as should break the match, and sink Christ in the thoughts of the creature? you may know where this was minted. When you hear one commend another for a wise or good man, and at last come in with a but, that dasheth all, you will easily think he is no friend to the man, but some sly enemy, that by seeming to commend, desires to disgrace the more: Thus when you find God represented to you as merciful and gracious, but not to so vile a sinner as you; to have power and strength, but not able to save you; you may say, Avaunt Satan, thy speech bewrayeth thee.

### SECT. III.

Thirdly, Another wile of Satan lies in cavilling at the Christian's duties and performances, by which he puts him to much toil and trouble. He is at church as soon as thou canst be, Christian; yea, he stands under thy closet-window, and hearest what thou sayest to God in secret, all the while studying how he may commence a suit against thee for thy duty; like those that come to sermons to carp and catch at what the Preacher saith, that they may make him an offender for some word or other misplaced; or like a cunning opponent in the schools, while his adversary is busy in reading his position, he is studying to confute it; and truly Satan hath such an art at this, that he is able to take our duties in pieces, and so disfigure them that they shall appear formal, though never so zealous; hypocritical, though enriched with much sincerity. When thou hast done thy duty, Christian, then stands up this Sophister to ravel out thy work; there (will he say) thou playedst the zealous hypocrite, but serving thyself, here wandering, there nodding; a little farther puffed up with pride, and what wages canst thou hope for at God's hands, now thou hast spoiled his work and cut it all out into chips? Thus he makes many poor souls lead a weary life; nothing they do but he hath a fling at; that they

know not whether best pray or not, hear or not; and when they have prayed and heard, whether it be to any purpose or not: Thus their souls hang in doubt, and their days pass in sorrow, while their enemy stands in a corner, and laughs at the cheat he hath put upon them; as one, who by putting a counterfeit spider into the dish, makes those that sit at table either out of conceit with the meat, that they dare not eat; or afraid of themselves if they have eaten, lest they should be poisoned with their meat.

*Quest.* But you will say, *What will you have us to do in this case, to withstand the cavils of Satan, in reference to our duties?*

First, Let this make thee more accurate in all thou doest; 'tis the very end God aims at in suffering Satan thus to watch you, that you his children might be the more circumspect, because you have one overlooks you, that will be sure to tell tales of you to God, and accuseth thee to thy own self. Doth it not behove thee to write thy copy fair, when such a critic reads and scans it over? Doth it not concern thee to know thy heart well, to turn over the scriptures diligently, that thou mayest know the state of thy soul-controversy in all the cases of conscience thereof, when thou hast such a subtle opponent to reply to thee.

Secondly, Let it make thee more humble. If Satan can charge thee with so much in thy best duties, O what then can thy God do? God suffers sometimes the infirmities of his people to be known by the wicked (who are ready to check them for them) for this end, to humble his people; how much more low should these accusations of Satan, which are in a great part too true, lay us before God?

Thirdly, Observe the fallacy of Satan's argument, which discovered, will help thee to answer his cavil; the fallacy is double.

First, He will persuade thee that thy duty and thyself are hypocritical, proud, formal, &c. because something of these sins are to be found in thy duty: Now, Christian, learn to distinguish between pride in a duty, and a proud duty, hypocrisy in a person, and a hypocrite; wine in a man, and a man in wine. The best of Saints have the stirring of such corruptions in them, and in their services; these birds will light on an *Abraham's* sacrifice; but comfort thyself with this, that if thou findest a party within thy bosom pleading for God, and entering its  
protest



protest against these, thou and thy services are evangelically perfect. God beholds these as the weaknesses of thy sickly state here below, and pities thee as thou wouldest do thy lame child: How odious is he to us that mocks one for natural defects, a blear eye, or a stammering tongue? Such are these in thy nature. Observable is that in Christ's Prayer against Satan, *Zech. iii. 3. The Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, is not this a brand pluck'd out of the fire?* As if Christ had said, Lord, wilt thou suffer this envious Spirit to reproach thy poor child, and charge him for those infirmities that cleave to his imperfect state? he is but newly pluck'd out of the fire, no wonder there are some sparks unquench'd, some corruption unmortified, some disorders unreformed in his place and calling. And what Christ did for Joshua, he doth incessantly for all his Saints, apologizing for their infirmities with his Father.

Secondly, His other fallacy is in arguing from the sin that is in our duties, to the non-acceptance of them. Will God, saith he, thinkest thou, take such broken groats at thy hand? Is he not a holy God? Now here (Christian) learn to distinguish and answer Satan. There is a double acceptance. There is an acceptance of a thing by way of payment of debt, and there is an acceptance of a thing offered as a token of love, and testimony of gratitude. He that will not accept of broken money, or half the sum for payment of a debt; the same man, if his friend tends him but a bent sixpence, in token of his love, will take it kindly. 'Tis true Christian, the debt thou owest to God must be paid in good and lawful money; but (for thy comfort) here Christ is thy pay-master; send Satan to him, bid him bring his charge against Christ, who is ready at God's hand to clear his accounts, and shew his discharge for the whole debt; but now thy performances and obedience come under another notion (as tokens of thy love and thankfulness to God) and such is the gracious disposition of thy heavenly Father, that he accepts thy mite. Love refuseth nothing that love sends. 'Tis not the weight or worth of the gift, but *the desire of man is his kindness*, Prov. xix. 22.

SECT.

## SECT. IV.

A fourth wile of Satan as a Troubler, is, to draw the Saint into the depths of despair, under the specious pretence of not being humbled enough for sin. This we find singled out by the Apostle for one of the Devil's fetches, *We are not ignorant* (saith he) *of his devices*, 2 Cor. ii. 11. his sophistical reasonings. Satan sets much by this slight; no weapon oftener in his hand: Where is the Christian that hath not met him at this door? Here Satan finds the Christian easy to be wrought on, the humours being stirred to his hand, while the Christian of his own accord, complains of the hardness of his heart, and is very prone to believe any, who comply with his musing thoughts; yea, thinks every one flatters him, that would persuade him otherwise. 'Tis easier to dye that soul into black, which is of a sad colour already, than to make such an one take the lightsome tincture of joy and comfort.

Quest. *But how shall I answer this subtle enemy, when he thus perplexeth my spirit, with not being humbled enough for sin, &c.*

I answer as to the former; labour to spy the fallacy of his argument, and his mouth is soon stopt.

First, Satan argues thus: There ought to be a proportion between sin and sorrow; but there is no proportion between thy sins and thy sorrow; therefore thou art not humbled enough. What a plausible argument is here at first blush? For the *major*, that there ought to be a proportion between sin and sorrow; this Satan will shew you scripture for.

*Manasseh* was a great sinner, and an ordinary sorrow will not serve his turn; *he humbled himself greatly before the Lord*, 1 Chron. iii. 12. Now (saith Satan) weigh thy sin in the balance with thy sorrow; art thou as great a mourner as thou hast been a sinner? So many years thou hast waged war against the Almighty, making havoc of his laws, loading his patience till it groaned again, raking in the sides of Christ with thy bloody dagger (while thou didst grieve his spirit, and reject his grace) and dost think a little remorse (like a rolling

rolling cloud letting fall a few drops of sorrow) will now be accepted? No, thou must steep in sorrow as thou hast soaked in sin: Now, to shew you the fallacy, we must distinguish of a two-fold proportion of sorrow.

First, An exact proportion of sorrow to the inherent nature and demerit of sin.

Secondly, There is a proportion to the law and rule of the gospel. Now the first is not a thing feasible, because the injury done in the least sin is infinite, because done to an infinite God; and if it could be feasible, yet according to the tenour of the first covenant, it would not be acceptable; because it had no clause to give any hope for an after-game by repentance; but the other, which is a gospel-sorrow, this is indeed *repentance unto life*, Acts v. 31. Zech. xii. 10. (both given by the Spirit of the gospel, and tried by the rule of the gospel.) This is given for relief. As you see sometimes in the highway (where the waters are too deep for travellers) they have a foot-bridge or causeway, by which they may escape the flood, and safely pass on; so that none but such as have not eyes, or are drunk, will venture to go through the waters, when they may avoid the danger. Thou art a dead man, if thou thinkest to answer thy sin with proportionable sorrow, thou wilt soon be out of thy depth, and drown thyself with thy own tears, but never get over the least sin thou committest; go not on therefore, as thou lovest thyself, but turn aside to this gospel-path, and thou escapest the danger. O you tempted soul, when Satan saith you are not humbled enough, see where you may be relieved; *I am a Roman* (saith Paul) *I appeal to Cæsar*. I am a Christian, (say) I appeal to Christ's law; and what is the law of the gospel concerning this? Heart-sorrow is gospel-sorrow; *They were pricked in their heart*, Acts i. 37. and Peter (like an honest Surgeon) will not keep these bleeding patients longer in pain with their wounds open; but presently claps on the healing plaister of the gospel; *Believe in the Lord Jesus*. Now a prick to the heart is more than a wound to the conscience. The heart is the seat of life. Sin wounded there lies a dying. To do any thing from the heart, makes it acceptable, *Eph. vi. 6. 2 Cor. v. 11*. Now, poor soul, hadst thou sat thus long in the Devil's stocks, if thou hadst understood this aright? Doth thy heart clear or condemn thee, when in secret thou art bemoaning thy sin before

fore God? If thy heart be false, I cannot help you, no, not the gospel itself; but if sincere, thou hast boldness with God, 1 *John* iii. 21.

A second argument Satan useth, is this: He whose sorrow falls short of theirs, that never truly repented, he is not humble enough: But, soul, thy sorrow falls short of some, that never truly repented; Well, the first proposition is true, but how will Satan prove his *Minor*? Thus, *Ahab* took on for his sin, and went in sackcloth. *Judas* made bitter complaint. O (saith Satan) didst thou not know such an one that lay under terror of conscience, walking in a sad mournful condition so many months, and every one took him for the greatest convert in the country; and yet he at last fell foully and proved an apostate; but thou never didst feel such smart, pass so many weary nights and days in mourning and bitter lamentation as he hath done, therefore thou fallest short of one that fell short of repentance. And truly this is a sad stumbling block to a soul in an hour of temptation. Like a ship sunk in the mouth of the harbour, which is more dangerous to others than if it had perished in the open sea. There is less scandal by the sins of the wicked, who sink (as it were) in the broad sea of profaneness, than in those who are convinced of sin, troubled in conscience, and miscarry so near the harbour, within sight, as it were, of saving grace. Tempted souls can hardly get over these without dashing.

Am I better than such an one that proved nought at last? Now to help thee a little to find out the fallacy of this argument, we must distinguish between the terrors that accompany sorrow, and the intrinsical nature of this grace. The first which are accessory may be separated from the other, as the raging of the sea (which is caused by the wind) when the wind is down. From this distinction take two conclusions.

First, One may fall short of an hypocrite in the terrors that sometimes accompany sorrow, and yet have the truth of this grace, which the other with all his terrors wants. Christians run into many mistakes, by judging rather according to that which is accessory, than that which is essential to the nature of duties and graces. Sometimes thou hearest one pray with a moving expression (whilst thou canst hardly get out a few broken words in duty) and thou art ready to accuse thyself and to admire him; as if the  
brightness

brightness of the key made it open the door the better; thou seest another abound with joy which thou wantest, and art ready to conclude his grace more, and thine less, whereas thou mayest have more real grace, only thou wantest a light to shew thee were it lies. Take heed of judging by accessaries; perhaps thou hast not heard so much of the rattling of the chains of Hell, nor in thy conscience the out-cries of the damned, to make thy flesh tremble; but hast thou not seen that in a bleeding Christ which hath made thy heart melt and mourn, yea, loath and hate thy lusts more than the Devil himself? Truly (Christian) 'tis strange, to hear a patient complain of the physician (when he finds his physick work effectually to the evacuating of his distempred humours, and the restoring his health) merely because he was not so sick as some others with the working of it; soul, thou hast more reason to be blessing God that the conviction of the spirit wrought so on thee, to effect that in thee, without those terrors, which have cost others so dear.

Secondly, This is so weak an argument, that contrary-wise the more the terrors are, the less the sorrow is for sin while they remain: These are indeed preparatory sometimes to sorrow; they go before this grace, as austere *John* before meek *Jesus*. But as *John* went down when *Christ* went up, his increase was *John's* decrease; so as godly sorrow ariseth, terrors decline. As the wind gathers the clouds, but those clouds seldom melt into a set rain, until the wind falls that gathered them; so these terrors raise the clouds of our sins in our consciences; but when these sins melt into godly sorrow, this lays the storm presently; indeed, as the loud winds do blow away the rain, so these terrors do keep off the soul from this gospel sorrow. While the creature is making an out-cry, 'tis damned! 'tis damned! it is taken up so much with the fear of Hell, that sin, as sin (which is the proper object of godly sorrow) is little looked on or mourned for. A murderer condemned to die, is so possess with the fear of death, and thought of the gallows, that there lies the slain body (it may be) before him, unlamented by him; but when his pardon is brought, then he can bestow his tears, freely on his murdered friend, *They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn.* Faith is the eye, this eye (beholding its sin piercing Christ, and Christ pardoning its  
sin)

sin) affects the heart, the heart affecting sighs; these inward clouds melt and run from the eye of faith in tears; and all this is done when there is no tempest of terror upon the spirit, but a sweet serenity of love and peace: and therefore Christian, see how Satan abuseth thee, when he would persuade thee thou art not humbled enough, because thy sorrow is not attended with these illegal terrors.

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## CHAP. VI.

*A brief Application of the second Branch of the Point, viz. Of Satan's Subtilty as a Troubler and Accuser for Sin.*

Use 1 **U**S Satan so subtle to trouble the Saints peace? This proves them to be the children of Satan, who shew the same art and subtilty in vexing the spirit of the saints, as doth their infernal father; not to speak of bloody persecutors, who are the Devil's slaughter-men to butcher the Saints; but those who more silyly trouble and molest the Saints peace.

First, Such as rake up the Saints old sins, which God hath forgiven and forgotten (merely to grieve their spirits and bespatter their names) these shew their devilish malice indeed, who can take such pains to travel many years back, that they may find a handful of dirt to throw in the Saint's face. Thus *Shimei* reproached *David*, *Come out thou bloody man*, 2 Sam. xiv. 6, 7 When you that fear God meet with such reproaches, answer them as *Beza* did the Papists, who for want of other matter charged him for some wanton poems penned by him in his youth, *Hi homunciones invident nihi gratium Dei*. These men, said he, grudge me the pardoning mercy of God.

Secondly, Such as watch for the Saints halting, and catch at every infirmity to make them odious and themselves merry. 'Tis a dreadful curse such bring upon themselves (though they little think of it) no less than *Amalek's*, the remembrance of whose name God threatened to blot from under Heaven; why, What had *Amalek* done to deserve this? They smote the hindermost, those that were feeble, Deut. xxv. 19. and could not march with the rest. And was it so great a cruelty to do this? Much more to smite with the edge of a mocking tongue the feeble in grace.

Thirdly, Such who father their sins upon the Saints; thus *Ahab* calls the prophet *the troubler of Israel*, when it was himself and his father's house. What grief was it, think you, to *Moses'* spirit, for the *Israelites* to lay the blood of those that died in the wilderness at his door? Whereas; God knows, he was their constant bail, when at any time God's hand was up to destroy them; and this is the charge which the best of God's servants in this crooked generation of ours lie under: We may thank them, say the profane, for all our late miseries in the nation; we were well enough till they would reform us. O for shame, blame not the good physic that was administered, but the corrupt body of the nation that could not bear it.

Fourthly, Such as will themselves sin, merely to trouble the Saints spirit; thus *Rabshakah* blasphemed, and when desired to speak in another language, he goes on the more to grieve them. Sometimes you shall have a profane wretch (knowing one to be conscientious, and cannot brook to hear the name of God taken in vain, or the ways of God flouted) will purposely fall upon such discourse as shall affect his chaste eyes, and trouble his gracious spirit; such an one strikes father and child at one blow, thinks it not enough to dishonour God, except the Saint stands by to see and hear the wrong done to his Heavenly Father.

Secondly, This may afford matter of admiration and thankfulness to you, O ye Saints, who are not at this day under Satan's hatches. Is he so subtle to disquiet, and hast thou any peace in thy conscience? To whom art thou beholden for that serenity that is on thy spirit? To none but thy God, under whose wing thou sittest so warm and safe. Is there not combustible matter enough in thy conscience for his sparks to kindle? Perhaps thou hast not committed

such bloody sins as others; that is not the reason of thy peace, for the least is big enough to damn, much more to trouble thee. Thou hast not grossly fallen (may be) since conversion, that is rare, (if thou art of long standing) yet the ghosts of thy unregenerate sins might walk in thy conscience: thou hast had many testimonies of God's favour; so had *David*, Psal. lxxvii. Yet he is at a loss sometimes how to spell his evidences, as if he could never have read them. The sense of God's love comes and goes with the present taste. He that is in the dark sees not the more for former light. O bless God for that light which shines in at thy window; Satan is plotting to undermine thy comfort every day. This thief sees thy pleasant fruits as they hang, and his teeth water at them, but the wall is too high for him to climb; thy God keeps this serpent out of thy paradise. 'Tis not the grace of God in thee, but the favour of God, as a shield about thee, defends thee from the wicked one.

Thirdly, Let Satan's subtilty to molest your peace, make thee, Christian, more wise and wary; thou hast not a fool to deal with, but one that hath wit enough to spill thy comfort, and spoil thy joy, if not narrowly watched: This is the dainty bit he gapes for; 'tis not harder to keep the flies out of your cupboards in summer from tainting your provision, than Satan out of your consciences; many a sweet meal hath he robbed the Saints of, and sent them supperless to bed; take heed therefore that he steals not thine away also.

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## CHAP. VII.

*Containing some Directions, tending to entrench and fortify the Christian against the Assaults and Wiles of the Devil, as a Troubler of the Soul's peace.*

**Ques.** **H**OW shall I stand in a defensive posture against the wiles of Satan as a troubler?

SECT.



## SECT. I.

First, If thou wouldest be guarded from him as a troubler, take heed of him as a seducer. The haft of Satan's hatchet (with which he lies chopping at the root of the Christian's comfort) is commonly made of the Christian's wood; First, he tempts to sin, and then for it. Satan is but a creature, and cannot work without tools, he cannot indeed make much of a little, but not any thing of nothing, as we see in his assaulting of Christ, where he troubled himself to little purpose, because he came and found nothing in him, John xiv. 30. Though the Devil throws the stone, yet it is the mud in us that disturbs our comforts. 'Twas in vain for the Philistines to fall on Samson till his locks were cut: Take heed therefore of yielding to his enticing motions; these are the stumbling blocks, at which he hopes thou wilt break thy shins, and bruise thy conscience, which once done, let him alone to spin out the cure. Indeed the Saint's flesh heals not so easily as others: drink not of the Devil's vessel, there is poison in the cup, his wine is a mocker, look not on it as it sparkles in the temptation; what thou drinkest down with sweetness, thou wilt be sure to bring up again as gall and worm-wood. Above all sins, take heed of presumptuous ones, thou art not out of danger of such. Psal. v. 13. Sad stories we have of Saints falls, and what follows! Then, take him Jailor, (saith God) *Deliver such an one unto Satan*; and if a Saint be the prisoner, and the Devil the keeper, you may guess how he shall be used. O how he will tear and rend thy conscience! Though that dreadful ordinance is not used (as it should be) in the church, yet God's court sits, and if he excommunicates a soul from his presence, he falls presently into Satan's hatches. Well, if through his subtilty thou hast been overtaken, take heed thou stayest not in the Devil's quarters, shake the viper off thy hand, ply thee to thy surgeon: green wounds cure best, but if thou neglectest, and the wind get to it, thy conscience will soon fester.

*Ahab*

*Ahab* (we read, 1 *Kings* xxii. 35.) was wounded in battle, and was loth to yield; it is said, he was held up in his chariot, but he died for it: When a soul hath received a wound, committed a sin, Satan labours to bolster him up with flattering hopes, holds him up, as it were, in the chariot against God; What yield for this? Afraid of a little scratch, and lose the spoil of thy future pleasure for this? O take heed of listening to such counsel, the sooner thou yieldest, the fairer quarter thou shalt have. Every step in this way, sets thee further from thy peace. A rent garment is caught by every nail, and the rent made wider. Renew therefore repentance speedily, whereby this breach may be made up, and worse prevented, which else will befall thee.

## SECT. II.

Secondly, Study that grand gospel-truth of a soul's justification before God, acquaint thyself with this in all its causes; the moving cause, the free mercy of God, being justified freely by his grace, Rom. iii. 24. the meritorious, which is the blood of Christ, and the instrumental faith, with all the sweet privileges that flow from it. An effectual door once opened to let the soul into this truth would not only spoil the Pope's market (as Gardner said) but the Devil's also; when Satan comes to disquiet the Christian's peace (for want of a right understanding here) he is soon worsted by his enemy; as the silly hare which might escape the dogs in some covert or borough that is at hand, but trusting to her heels is by the print of her own feet and scent, which she leaves behind, followed, till at last weary and spent, she falls into the mouth of them. In all that a Christian doth, there is a print of sinful infirmity, and a scent by which Satan is enabled to trace and pursue him over hedge and ditch, this grace and that duty, till the soul, not able to stand before the accusation of Satan, is ready to fall down in despair at his feet; whereas here is a hiding place, whither the enemy durst not come, the clefts of the rock, the hole of the stairs, which this truth leads unto. When Satan chargeth thee for a sinner, perhaps thou interposeth thy repentance and reformation,

tion, but soon art beaten out of those works, when thou art shewn the sinful mixtures that are in them, whereas this truth would stop all his bullets, that thou believest on him who hath said, *Not unto him that worketh, but to him that believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is imputed for righteousness*, Rom. iv. 5. Get therefore into this tower of the gospel covenant, and roll this truth (as she that stone on the head of Abimelech) on the head of Satan.

### SECT. III.

Thirdly, Be sure (Christian) thou keepest thy plains. Take heed that Satan coop thee not up in some straits, where thou canst neither well fight, nor fly. Such a trap the Egyptians hoped they had the Israelites in, when they cried, *They are entangled, they are entangled*. There are three kinds of straits wherein he labours to entrap the Christian; nice questions, obscure scriptures, and dark providences.

First, He labours to puzzle him with nice and scrupulous questions, (on purpose to retard the work, and clog him in his motion) that meeting with such intricacies in his Christian course, which he cannot easily resolve, thereby he may be made, either to give over, or go on heavily; therefore we have particular charge not to trouble the weak heads of young converts with doubtful disputations, Rom. xiv. 1.— Sometimes Satan will be asking the soul, how it knows election; and where he finds one not so fully resolved, as to dare to own the same, he frames his argument against such an one's closing with Christ and the promise; as if it were presumption to assume that (which is the only portion of the Elect) before we know ourselves of that number. Now, Christian, keep the plains, and thou art safe. 'Tis plain, we are not to make election a ground for our Faith, only our faith and calling a medium, or argument to prove our election.

Election indeed is first in order of divine acting. God chuseth before we believe; yet faith is first in our acting. We must believe before we can know we are elected, yea, by believing we know it. The husbandman knows it is spring by the sprouting of the grass, though he hath no astrology

to know the position of the Heavens; thou mayest know thou art elect, as surely by a work of grace in thee, as if thou hadst stood by God's elbow when he writ thy name in the book of life. It had been presumption for David to have thought he should have been King, till Samuel anointed him; but then none at all; when thou believest, and closest with Christ, then doth the Spirit of God anoint thee to the kingdom of Heaven; this is that holy oil which is poured upon none but heirs to glory; and 'tis no presumption to read what God's gracious purpose was towards thee of old, when he prints those his thoughts, and makes them legible in thy effectual calling; here thou dost not go up to Heaven, and pry into God's secrets, but Heaven comes down to thee, and reveals them. Again, he will ask the Christian, what was the time of his conversion; art thou a Christian (will he say) and dost thou not know when thou commenced? Now keep the plains, and content thyself with this, that thou seest the streams of grace, though the time of thy conversion be, like the head of Nilus, not to be found. God oft comes betimes, before gross sins have deflowered the soul, and steals into the creature's bosom without much noise. In such a case Satan doth but abuse thee, when he sends thee on this errand; you may know the sun is up, though you did not observe when it rose. Again, what will become of thee (saith Satan) if God should bring thee into such an affliction or trial, when thou must burn or turn, or when all thy outward estate shall be rent from thee, no meal in the barrel, or money in the purse; darest thou have so good an opinion of thyself, as to think that thy faith will hold out in such an hour of temptation? If thou hast but half an eye, Christian, thou mayest see what Satan drives at; this is an ensnaring question; by the fear of future troubles he labours to bring thee into a neglect of thy present duty, and indispose thee also for such a state whenever it falls. If a man hath much business to do on the morrow, 'tis his wisdom to discharge his mind thereof (when composing to sleep) lest the thoughts thereof break his rest, and make him the more unfit in the morning. The less rest the soul hath in God and his promise concerning future events, the less strength it will find to bear them when the pinch comes. When therefore thou art molested with such fears, pacify thy heart with these three plain conclusions.

First,

First, Every event is the product of God's providence; not a sparrow, much less a Saint, falls to the ground by poverty, sickness, persecution, &c. but the hand of God is in it.

Secondly, God hath put in a caution, *he will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*, Heb. xiii. 5. He that enables thee in one condition, will in another. God learns his servants their whole trade. Grace is an universal principle. At the first moments of thy spiritual life, suffering grace was infused as well as praying grace.

Thirdly, God is wise to conceal the succours he intends in the several changes of thy life, that so he may draw thy heart into an entire dependance on his faithful promise. Thus to try the metal of Abraham's faith he let him go on, till his hand was stretch'd forth, and then he comes to his rescue. Christ sends his disciples to sea, but stays behind himself, on a design to try their faith and shew his love. Comfort thyself therefore with this, though thou seest not thy God in the way, yet thou shalt find him in the end.

Secondly, Satan perplexes the tender consciences of doubting Christians with obscure scriptures, whose sense lies too deep for their weak and distempered judgments readily to find out, and with these he hampers poor souls exceedingly; indeed as melancholy men delight in melancholy walks, so doubting souls most frequent such places of scripture in their musing thoughts, as to increase their doubts; how many have I known that have looked so long on these difficult places, *Heb. vi. 7. Heb. x. 26.* (which pass the understanding as a swift stream the eye, so that the sense is not perceived without great observation) till their heads have turned round, and they at last (not able to untie the difficulties) have fallen down into despairing thoughts and words, crying out, O they have sinned against knowledge of the truth, and therefore no mercy remains for them; who if they had refreshed their understandings by looking off these places (whose engraving is too curious to be long pored on by a weak eye) they might have found that in other scriptures plainly expressed, which would have enabled them, as through a glass, more safely to have viewed these; therefore, Christian, keep the plains; thou mayest be sure 'tis thine enemy that gives thee such stones to break thy

thy teeth, when thy condition calls rather for bread and wine; such scriptures, I mean, as are most apt to nourish thy faith, and cheer thy drooping spirit. When thou meetest such plain scriptures which speak to thy case, go over where it is fordable, and do not venture beyond thy depth. Art thou afraid because thou hast sinned since the knowledge of the truth, and therefore no sacrifice remains for thee? See *David* and *Peter's* case, how it patterns thine; and left upon record that their recovery may be a key in thine hand to open such places as these; mayest thou not safely conclude from these, this is not their meaning, that none can be saved that sin after knowledge? Indeed in both these places, it is neither meant of the falls of such as ever had true grace, nor of a falling away in some particulars acts of sin, but of a total universal falling away from the faith, (the doctrine of it as well as seeming practice of it.) Now if the root of the matter were ever in thee, other scriptures will first comfort thee against those particular apostacies into which thou hast relapsed, by sweet promises inviting such to return, and precedents of Saints who have had peace spoken to them after such folly, and also they will satisfy thee against the other, by giving full security to thy faith, that thy little grace shall not die, being immortal, though not in its proper essence, because a creature, yet by covenant, as it is a child of promise.

Thirdly, Dark providences. From these Satan disputes against God's love to, and grace in a soul. First, he got a commission to plunder *Job* of his temporal estate, and bereave him of his children, and then labours to make him question his spiritual estate and sonship: his wife would have him entertain hard thoughts of God, (saying, *Curse God and die*) and his friends as hard thoughts of himself, (as if he were an hypocrite) and both upon the same mistake, as if such an afflicted condition, and a gracious state, were inconsistent. Now, Christian, keep the plains, and neither from this charge God foolishly for thine enemy, nor thyself as his; read the saddest providence, with the comment of the word, and thou canst not make such a harsh interpretation. As God can make a strait line with a crooked stick, be righteous when he useth wicked instruments; so also gracious when he dispenseth harsh providences. *Joseph* kept his love, when he spake roughly to his brethren. I do not wonder that the wicked think they have God's blessings, because

because they are in the warm sun: Alas, they are strangers to God's counsels, void of his spirit, and sensual; judging of God and his providence by the report present feeling makes of them; like little children, who think every one loves them that gives them plumbs. But 'tis strange, that a Saint should be at a loss for his afflicted state, when he hath a key to decipher God's character: Christian, hath not God secretly instructed thee by his spirit from the word, how to read the short hand of his providence? Dost not thou know that the Saint's afflictions stand for blessings? *Every son whom he loves he corrects*; and prosperity in a wicked state, must it not be read a curse? Doth not God condemn such to be rich, honourable, victorious in this world, as well as to be tormented in another? God gives them more of these than they seem to desire sometimes, and all to bind them faster up in a deep sleep of security, as *Jael served Sisera, Judg. v. 25.* he shall have milk, though he asked but water, that she might nail him the surer to the ground. Milk having a property, as some write, to incline to sleep.

#### S E C T. IV.

Fourthly, Be careful to keep thy old receipts which thou hast from God for the pardon of thy sins. There are some gaudy days and jubilee-like festivals, when God comes forth clothed with the robes of his mercy, and holds forth the sceptre of his grace more familiarly to his children than ordinary, bearing witness to their faith, &c. and then the firmament is clear, not a cloud to be seen to darken the Christian's comfort. Love and joy are the soul's repast and pastime, while this feast lasts. Now when God withdraws, and this cheer is taken off, Satan's work is how he may deface and wear off the remembrance of this testimony, which the soul so triumphs in for its spiritual standing, that he may not have it as an evidence when he shall bring about the suit again, and put the soul to produce his writings for his spiritual state, or renounce his claim. It behoves thee therefore to lay them up safely: Such a testimony may serve to non-suit thy accuser many years hence; one affirmative from God's mouth for thy pardoned state, carries more weight, though of old date, than a thousand negatives from Satan's. *David's songs of old* spring in with a light to his soul in his midnight sorrows.

*Quest.* But what counsel would you give me, saith the distressed soul, who cannot fasten on my former comforts, nor dare to avouch those evidences, which once I thought true? I find indeed there have been some treaties of old between God and my soul; some hopes I have had, but these are now so defaced and interlined with back-slidings, repentances and falls again, that now I question all my evidences, whether true or counterfeit: What shall one in this case do?

*Ans.* First, Renew thy repentance, as if thou hadst never repented. Put forth fresh acts of faith, as if thou hadst never believed. This seriously done, will stop Satan's mouth with an unexpected answer. Let him object against thy former actings as hypocritical, what can he say against thy present repenting and believing, which if true, sets thee beyond his shot. It will be harder for Satan to disprove the present workings of God's gracious spirit, whilst the impressions thereof are fresh, than to pick an hole in thy old deeds and evidences. Acts are transient, and as wicked men look at sins committed many years since, as little or none, by reason of that breadth of time which interposeth; so the Christian, upon the same account, stands at great disadvantage, to take the true aspect of those acts of grace, which so long ago passed between God and him, though sometimes even these are of great use. As God can make a sinner possess the sins of his youth, as if they were newly acted, to his terror in his old age; so God can present the comforts and evidences which of old the Saint received, with those very thoughts he had then of them, as if they were fresh and new.

And therefore, Secondly, If he haunts thee with fears of thy spiritual estate, ply thee to the throne of grace, and beg a new copy of thy old evidence, which thou hast lost. The original is in the pardon-office in Heaven, whereof Christ is master; if thou art a Saint, thy name is upon record in that court; make thy moan to God, hear what news from Heaven, rather than listen to the tales which are brought by thine enemy from Hell. Did such reason less with Satan, and pray over their fears more to God, they might sooner be resolved. Can you expect truth from a liar, and comfort from an enemy? Did he ever prophecy well of believers? Was not *Job* the Devil's hypocrite, whom God vouched for a non-such in holiness, and proved him so at last? If he knew



that thou wert a Saint, would he tell thee so? If an hypocrite, he would be loth thou should know it; turn thy back therefore on him, and go to thy God: fear not, but sooner or later he will give his hand again to thy certificate. But look thou dost not pass rashly a censure on thyself, because a satisfactory answer is not presently sent at thy desire; the messenger may stay long, and bring good news at last.

Thirdly, Shun battle with thine enemy till thou art in a fitter posture; and that thou mayest withdraw into thy trenches, and make an honourable retreat into those strong-holds, which Christ hath provided for his sick and wounded soldiers. Now there are two places of advantage into which deserted souls may retire; the name of God, and the absolute promises of the gospel; these I may call the fair havens, which are then chiefly of use, when the storm is so great, that the ship cannot live at sea. O, saith Satan, dost thou hope to see God? None but the pure in heart shall be blest with that vision. Thinkest thou to have comfort? That is the portion of the mourners in spirit. Now, soul, though thou canst not say, in the hurry of temptation, thou art the pure and the mourner in spirit, yet say thou believest God is able to work these in thee, yea, hath promised such a mercy to poor sinners, 'tis his covenant, (he will give a new heart, a clean heart, a soft heart) and I wait, knowing, that as there was nothing in the creature, to move the great God to make such promises; so there can be nothing in the creature to hinder the Almighty performing of them where and when he pleaseth. This act of faith, accompanied with a longing desire after that grace, thou canst not yet find, attendance on the means, though it will not fully satisfy all thy doubts, yet will keep thy head above water, that thou despair not; and such a shore thou needest in this case, or the house falls.

Fourthly, If yet Satan dogs thee, call in help, and keep not the Devil's counsel. The very strength of some temptation lies in the concealing of them, and the very revealing of them to some faithful friend, (like the opening and pricking of an impostume) gives the soul present ease: Satan knows this too well; and therefore, as some thieves, when they come to rob an house, either gag them in it, or hold a pistol to their breast, frightening them with death if they cry or speak: Thus Satan, that he may the more freely rifle the soul of its peace and comfort, over-awes it so, that it dare-

not disclose his temptation. O, saith Satan, if thy brethren or friends know such a thing by thee, they will cast thee off, others will hoot at thee. Thus many a poor soul hath been kept long in its pangs by biting them in; thou lovest, Christian, a double help by keeping the Devil's secret, the counsel and prayers of thy fellow-brethren; and what an invaluable loss is this?

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## CHAP. VIII.

*Of the Saints Victory over their subtle Enemy, and whence it is that creatures so overmatched, should be able to stand against Satan's Wiles.*

THE second branch of the Apostle's argument follows, to excite the more vigorously to their arms, and that is from the possibility, yea, certainty, of standing against this subtle enemy, if thus arm'd, *That ye may be more able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.* So that this gives the Apostle's argument its due temperament; for he meant not to scare them into a cowardly flight, or sullen despair of victory, when he tells them their enemy is so subtle and politic; but to excite them to a vigorous resistance, from the assured hope of strength to stand in battle, and victory after it; which two I conceive are comprehended in that phrase, standing against the wiles of Satan. Sometimes *to stand*, implies a fighting posture; so v. 14. Sometimes a conquering posture, Job. xix. 25. *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.* That earth which was the field, where all the bloody battles were fought between him and Satan, on it shall he stand, when not an enemy shall dare to shew his head. So that taking both these in; the observation is,

*Doct.* Satan with all his wits and wiles shall never vanquish a soul arm'd with true grace; nay, he that hath this armour of God on, shall vanquish him. Look into the word,  
you

you shall not find a Saint, but hath been in the list with him, sifted and winnowed more or less by this enemy, yet at last we find them all coming off with an honourable victory; as in *David, Job, Peter, Paul*, who were the hardest put to it of any upon record; and lest some should attribute their victory to the strength of their own inherent grace, above other of their weak brethren, you have the glory of victories appropriated to God, in whom the weak are as strong as the strongest, 2 Cor. xii. 9. Jam. v. 21. We shall give a double reason of this truth, why the Christian who seems overmatch'd, is yet so unconquerable.

First, the curse that lies upon Satan and his cause. God's curse blasts wherever it comes. The Canaanites with their neighbour-nations were *bread for Israel*, though people famous for war; and why? they were cursed nations. The *Egyptians* a politic people; *Let us deal wisely* (say they) yet being cursed of God, this lay like a thorn at their heart, and was at last their ruin: yea let the Israelites themselves, (who carry the badge of God's covenant on their flesh) by their sins once become the people of God's curse, and they are trampled like dirt under the Assyrian's foot. This made *Balak* beg so hard for a curse upon *Israel*. Now there is an irrevocable curse cleaves to Satan from Isa. x. 5. Gen. iii. 14, 15. *And the Lord said to the Serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed, &c.* which place, though partly meant of the literal serpent, yet chiefly of the Devil and the wicked, (his spiritual serpentine brood) as appears by the enmity pronounced against the Serpent's seed and the woman's, which clearly holds forth the seed between Christ with his seed, against the Devil and his. Now there are two things in that curse which may comfort the Saints. First, the curse prostrates Satan under their feet: *Upon thy belly shalt thou go*; which is no more than is elsewhere promised; that God *will subdue Satan under our feet*. Now this prostrate condition of Satan assures believers, that the Devil shall never lift his head (that is, his wily policy) higher than the Saint's heel. He may make thee limp, but not bereave thee of thy life, and this bruise which he gives thee shall be rewarded with the *breaking of his own head*, that is the utter ruin of him and his cause.

Secondly, His food is here limited and appointed. Satan shall not devour whom he will. The *dust* is his food, which seems

seems to restrain his power to the wicked, who are of the earth earthy, mere dust; but for those who are of heavenly extraction, their graces are reserved for Christ's food, *Cant.* vii. 13. and their souls surely are not a morsel for the Devil's tooth.

The second reason is taken from the wisdom of God, who as he undertakes the ordering of the Christian's way to Heaven, *Psal.* xxxvii. 24. so especially this business of Satan's temptations. We find Christ was not led of the evil spirit into the wilderness to be tempted, but of the Holy Spirit, *Matt.* iv. 1. Satan tempts not when he will, but when God pleaseth; and the same Holy Spirit which led Christ into the field, brought him off with victory. And therefore we find him marching in the power of the Spirit (after he had repulsed Satan) into Galilee, *Luke* iv. 14. When Satan tempts a Saint, he is but God's messenger, *2 Cor.* xii. 7. *There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet me*, so our translation. But rather as Beza, who will have it *in casu recto*, the messenger Satan, implying that he was sent of God to Paul; and indeed the errand he came about was too good and gracious to be his own, Lest I should be exalted above measure; the Devil never meant to do Paul such a good office; but God sends him to Paul, as David sent Uriah with letters to Joab, neither knew the contents of their message.

The Devil and his instruments, both are God's instruments, therefore the wicked are called his *Sword*, his *Axe*, *Psal.* xvii. 13. *Isa.* x. 15. now let God alone to wield the one, and handle the other. He is but a bungler that hurts and hackles his own legs with his own axe; which God would do, if his children should be the worse for Satan's temptations. Let the Devil chuse his way, God is for him at every weapon. If he will try it by force of arms, and assaults the Saints by persecution, *the Lord of Hosts* will oppose him. If by policy and subtilty, he is ready there also. The Devil and all his council are but fools to God. Nay, their wisdom, foolishness.

Cunning and art commend every thing but sin. The more artificial the watch, the picture, &c. the better; but the more wit and art in sin, the worse, because it is employed against an all-wise God, that cannot be out-witted, and therefore will in the end but pay the workmen in greater damnation.

damnation. *The foolishness of God is wiser than man,* yea, than the wisdom of men and Devils, that is, the means and instruments which God opposeth Satan withal. What weaker than a sermon? who sillier than the Saints in the account of the wise world? yet God is wiser in a weak sermon, than Satan in his deep plots (wherein the state heads of a whole concave of profound Cardinals are knock'd together) wiser in his simple ones, than Satan in his Achitophels and Sanballats; and truly God chuseth on purpose to defeat the policies of Hell and earth by these, that he may put such to greater shame, 1 Cor. i. 21. How is the great scholar ashamed to be baffled by a plain countryman's argument? thus God calls forth Job, to wrestle with Satan and his seconds, for such his three friends shewed themselves in taking the Devil's part, and sure he is not able to hold up the cudgels against the fencing master, who is beaten by one of his scholars.

God sits laughing, while Hell and earth sit plotting, Psal. ii. 4. *He disappointeth the devices of the crafty,* he breaketh their studied thoughts and plots, as the words import, Job v. 12. in one moment pulling down the labours of many years policy. Indeed, as great men keep wild beasts for game and sport, as the fox, the boar, &c. so doth God, Satan and his instruments, to manifest his wisdom in the taking of them. It is observed, that the very hunting of some beasts, affords not only pleasure to the hunter, but also more sweetness to the eater. Indeed, God, by displaying of his wisdom in the pursuit of his Saints enemies, doth superadd a sweet relish to their deliverances at last. *He brake the heads of the Leviathan in pieces, and gave him to be meat to his people.* After he had hunted Pharaoh out of his forms and boroughs, now he breaks the very brains of all his plots, and serves him up to his people with the garnishment of his wisdom and power about.

## CHAP. IX.

*An Account is given, how the All-wise God doth out-wit the Devil in his tempting of Saints to Sin; wherein are laid down the Ends Satan propounds, and how he is prevented in all, with the gracious Issue that God puts to these his Temptations.*

*Quest.* **B**UT how doth God defeat Satan, and out-wit his wiles in tempting his Saints?

*Ans.* This God doth by accomplishing his own gracious ends for the good and comfort of his people, out of those temptations from which Satan designs their ruin; this is the noblest kind of conquest, to beat back the Devil's weapon to the wounding of his own head, yea, to cut it off with the Devil's own sword; thus God sets the Devil to catch himself, and lays, as it were, his own counsels under Satan's wings, and makes him hatch them. Thus the *Patriarchs* helped to fulfil *Joseph's* dream, while they were thinking to rid their hands of him. To instance in a few particulars.

## SECT. I.

First, Satan by his temptations aims at the defiling of the Christian's conscience, and disfiguring that beautiful face of God's image, which is engraven with holiness in the Christian's bosom; he is an unclean spirit himself, and would have them such, that he might glory in their shame; but God out-wits him, for he turneth the temptations of Satan to sin, to the purging them from sin; they are the *black soap* with which God washeth his Saints *white*.

First, God useth the temptations of Satan to one sin, as a preventive against another; as *Paul's thorn in the flesh* to prevent his pride. God sends Satan to assault *Paul* on that  
side.

side where he is strong, that in the mean time he may fortify him where he is weak. Thus Satan is counteracted; as sometimes we see an army sitting down before a town, where it wastes its strength to no purpose; and in the mean time, gives the enemy an advantage to recruit, and all this by the counsel of some one that is a secret friend to the contrary side. God, who is the Saint's true friend, sits in the Devil's counsel, and over-rules proceedings there to the Saint's advantage; he suffers the Devil to annoy the Christian with temptations to blasphemy, atheism; and by these, together with the troubles of spirit they produce, the soul is driven to duty, is humbled in the sense of these horrid apparitions in its imagination, and secured from abundance of formality and pride, which otherwise God saw invading him. As in a family, some business falls out, which keeps the Master up later than ordinary, and by this the thief, who that night intended to rob him, is disappointed; had not such a soul had his spirit of prayer and diligence, kept awake by those afflicting temptations, 'tis likely Satan might have come as a seducer, and taken him napping in security.

Secondly, God purgeth out the very sin Satan tempts to, even by his tempting. *Peter* never had such a conquest over his self-confidence, never such an establishment of his faith, as after his foul fall in the High-Priest's hall. He that was so well persuaded of himself before, as to say, Though all were offended with Christ, yet would not he; yet how modest and humble was he in a few days become, when he durst not say, he loved Christ more than his fellow-brethren, to whom before he had preferred himself? What an undaunted Confessor of Christ and his Gospel doth he prove before Councils and Rulers, who even now was dashed out of countenance by a silly maid? and all this the produce of Satan's temptation sanctified unto him. Indeed a Saint hath a discovery by his fall, what is the prevailing corruption in him; so that the temptation doth but stir the humour, which the soul having found out, hath the greater advantage to evacuate, by applying those means, and using those ingredients which do purge that malady. Now the soul will call out against this destroyer; *Paul* had not took such pains to *buffet his body*, had he not found Satan knocking at the door.

Thirdly, God useh these temptations for the advancing of the whole work of grace in the heart. One spot occasions the whole garment to be washed. *David* overcome with one sin, renews his repentance for all, *Psal.* li. A good husband, when he seeth it rain in at one place, sends for the workman to look over all the house. This indeed distinguisheth a sincere heart from an hypocrite, whose repentance is partial, soft in one plot, and hard in another. *Judas* cries out of his treason, but not a word of his thievery and hypocrisy. The hole was no wider in his conscience than where the bullet went in; whereas true sorrow for one, breaks the heart into shivers for others also.

Secondly, Satan by tempting one Saint, hath a mischievous design against others, either by encouraging them to sin by the example of such a one, or discouraging them in their holy course by the scandal he hath given; but God here counteracts him.

First, Making the miscarriages of such, a reasonable caveat to others to look to their standing. Dost thou see a meek *Moses* provoked to anger? What watch had thou need keep over thy unruly heart? Though loud winds do some hurt by blowing down here a loose tile, and there a turret, (which was falling before) yet the common good surmounts the private damage of some few; these being as a broom in God's hand to sweep and cleanse the air; so though some (that are wicked) are by God's righteous judgment for the same hardened into further abominations by the Saints fall, yet the good which sincere souls receive by having their formality and security in a further degree purged, both abundantly counteract the other; as they are but sent a little faster, whither they were going before.

Secondly, God makes his Saints' falls an argument for comfort to distressed consciences. This hath been, and is as a feather to drop a little hope into the soul, to keep the creature from falling into utter despair; some have been revived with this, when next door to Hell, in their own fears. *David's* sin was great, yet he found mercy; *Peter* fell foully, yet is now in Heaven. Why sittest thou here, O my soul! under the hatches of despair? Up, and call upon thy God for mercy, who hath pardoned the same to others.

Thirdly, God hath a design in suffering Satan to trounce some of his Saints by temptation, to train them up into a  
fitness



fitness to succour their fellow-brethren in the like condition; he sends them hither to school, that the cruel hand over them may make them study the word and their own hearts, by which they get experience of Satan's policies, till at last they commence masters in this art of comforting tempted souls. It is an art by itself, *to speak a word in season to the weary soul*: it is not serving out an apprenticeship to human arts will furnish a man for this; it is not the knowledge of the scripture will suffice: No, not grace itself, except exercised with these buffetings and soul-conflicts. Christ himself we find trained up in this school, *Isa* 1. 4. *He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.* His sufferings (which were all along mingled with temptations) were the lectures from which he came out so learned, to resolve and comfort distressed souls. So that the Devil had better have let Christ alone, yea, and his Saints also, who do him but the greater disservice in comforting others; none will handle poor souls so gently as those, who remember the smart of their own hearts-sorrows; none so skillful in applying the comforts of the word to wounded consciences, as those who have lain bleeding themselves; such know the symptoms of soul-trouble, and feel others' pains in their own bosoms, which some that know the scriptures (for lack of experience) do not, and therefore are like a novice Physician, who perhaps can tell you every plant in the herbal, yet wanting the practical part, when a patient comes, knows not well how to make use of his skill. The Saints experiences help them to a sovereign treacle made of the scorpion's own flesh, (which they through Christ have slain) and that hath a virtue above all other to expel the venom of Satan's temptations from the heart.

## SECT. II.

Thirdly, Satan in tempting the Saint to sin, labours to make a breach between God and the soul. He hates both, and therefore labours to divide these dear friends. If I can (thinks he) get such an one to sin, God will be angry, and he will whip his child soundly, this will be some sport; and when God is correcting the Saint, he will be questioning the love of God to him, so though I should not keep him from  
 Heaven

Heaven at last, yet he shall have little joy in the way thither. In this case, God and the soul will be like man and wife fallen out, who neither of them look kindly one upon another. Now see how God undermines Satan in both these.

First, God useth his Saints' temptations as his method by which he advanceth the communications of his love unto them. The devil thought he had got the goal, when he got Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, he thought now he had man in the same predicament with himself, as unlikely ever to see the face of God as his apostate spirits: But this was by God intended to usher in that great gospel plot of saving man by Christ, who (as soon as this prologue of man's fall is done) is brought upon the stage in that grand promise of the gospel made to Adam, and at God's command undertakes the charge of recovering lost man out of Satan's clutches, and reinstating him in his primitive glory, with an access more than ever he had at first; so that the meanest lily in Christ's field exceeds Adam in all his native royalty. And Satan as in his first temptation, is still on the losing side: What got he by all his pains upon Job, but to evidence to that holy man how dearly God loved him? When he foiled Peter so shamefully, do we not find Christ owning him with as much love as ever? Peter must be the only Disciple, to whom by name the joyful news of the resurrection is sent, *go tell my disciples and Peter*; as if Christ had said, be sure let his sad heart be comforted with this news, that he may know I am friends with him for all his late cowardice.

*Quest.* But doth not this seem to countenance sin, and make Christians heedless, whether they fall into temptation or no? If God does thus shew his love to his Saints after their falls and foils, why should we be so shy of sin, which ends so well at last?

*Ans.* Two things will prevent the danger of such an inference.

First, We must distinguish between a soul being foiled through his own infirmity, and his enemy's subtilty and power over-matching him; and another, who through a false heart doth voluntarily prostrate himself to the lust of Satan; though a General will shew little pity to a soldier that should traiterously throw down his arms and run to the enemy, yet if another in fighting receives a wound and be worsted, it will be no dishonour for him to express his pity and love,  
though

though he should send him out of the field in his own coach, lay him on his own bed, and appoint him his own surgeon.

God doth not encourage wickedness in a Saint, but pities weakness. Even when the Saints fall into a sin, they do not commit it so presumptuously as others; there is a part true to God in their bosoms, though over-powered. Moses spake unadvisedly, but the Devil had his instruments to provoke him, quite against the good man's temper. David numbers the people, but *1 Chron. xxi. 1. Satan stood up and provoked David to number Israel.* How bravely did Job repel Satan's darts? No wonder if in such a shower some one should get between the joints of his armour. And we know with what a zealous heart Peter went into the field; though when the enemy appeared, his heart failed him.

Secondly, Consider but the way God communicates his love after the Saints falls, not in sinning, or for sinning, but in mourning and humb'ing their souls for their sins. Indeed, did God smile on them while acting sinfully, this might strengthen their sin, as wine in a fever would the disease; but when the fit is off, the venom of the disease spent, and breathed out in humiliation, then the creature lies low. God's wine and comfort are cordials to the drooping spirit, not fuel for sin.

When David was led into temptation first, he must be clad in sackcloth and mourning, and then God takes it off, and puts on the garment of joy and praise, *1 Chron. xxi. 10. 15.* Job, though he exprest so much courage and patience, yet for his infirmities must abhor himself in dust and ashes, before God will take himself in arms, *Job xlii. 6.* Now to his Saints in such a posture, God may with safety, to his honour and their good, give a larger draught of his love than ordinary; their fears and sorrow which their sin hath cost them, will serve instead of water to dash this strong wine of joy, and take away its headiness, that it neither fume up into pride, nor occasion them to reel backward into apostacy.

*Quest.* But why doth God now communicate his love?

*Ans.* 1. First, from his pitiful nature; *You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.* God loves not to rake bleeding wounds, he knows a mournful soul is sub-  
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ject to be discouraged. A frown or angry look from God, whom the Saint so dearly loves, must needs go near the heart; therefore God declares himself at hand to revive such, Isa. lvii. 15. and he gives the reason, *v. 16 For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wrath, for the spirit should fail before me.* Whose spirit is there meant? Not of the presumptuous sinner; but of the contrite and humble. As the Father observes the disposition of his children, one commits a fault and goes on rebelliously, despising his father's anger; another (when offending) lays it to heart, refuseth to eat, gets into some corner to lament the displeasure of his father; the father sees it, and his bowels yearn towards him. Indeed, should he not put a child out of fear by discovering his love, the spirit of such an one would fail; 'tis not possible there should be a long breach between such a father and such a son, the one relenting over his sin, the other mourning over his son.

Secondly, God doth thus, to pour the greater shame upon Satan, who is the mischief-maker, between God and the soul. How is the man ashamed that hath stirred up variance between husband and wife, father and son, to see the breach made up, and all set themselves against him? it went ill on Christ's side, when Herod and Pilate were made friends, and can it go well with Satan to see all well between God and his children? If Esther be in favour, Haman her enemy shall have his face covered. Indeed, this covers Satan's face with shame, to see a poor Saint even now his prisoner, whom he had leave to rob and plunder, tempt and disquiet, now sitting in the sunshine of God's love, while he like a ravening lion takes on for the loss of his prey.

Secondly, Satan's aim is, to weaken the Saint's faith on God, and cool his love to God, but he is disappointed in both; for first, God turns their temptations, yea, their falls, to the further establishment of their faith, which (like the tree) stands stronger for its shaking, or like the giant Anteus, who, in his wrestling with Hercules, is said to get strength by every fall to the ground. False faith, indeed once foiled, seldom comes on again; but true faith riseth and fights more valiantly, as we see in Peter and other scripture-examples.

Temptation to faith, is as fire to gold, 1 Pet. i. 7. The fire doth not only discover which is pure gold, but makes  
the

the true gold more pure; perhaps it comes out less in bulk and weight, because severed from soil and dross; but more in value and worth.

When Satan is bound up, and the Christian walks under the beams of divine favour, and encouragement of divine assistance; his faith may appear great, if compared with another under the withdrawings of God, and buffetings of Satan; but this is not equal judgment; as if to try who is biggest of two men, we should measure one naked, and the other over his clothes; or in comparing two pieces of gold, weigh one with the dross and dirt, the other purged from these in the fire; faith before temptation hath much heterogeneous stuff that cleaves to it, and goes for faith, but when temptation comes, these are discovered. Now the Christian feels corruption stir, which lay as dead before, now a cloud comes between the soul and the sweet face of God, (the sense of which latter, and the little sense of the other bore up his faith before) but these bladders pricked, he comes now to learn the true stroke of this heavenly art of swimming on the promise, having nothing else to bear him up; and a little of this carries more of the precious nature of faith in it than all the other; yea, is (like *Gideon's* handful of men) stronger, when all these accessaries to faith are sent away, than when they were present; this is all the devil gets: instead of destroying his faith which he aims at, he is the occasion of the refining of it, and thereby adding to its strength.

Secondly, The love of Saints is enkindled to Christ by their temptations, and foils in their temptations. Possibly at first there may seem a damp upon their love, as when water is first sprinkled upon the fire; but when the conflict is a little over, and the Christian comes to himself, his love to Christ will break out like a vehement flame.

First, the shame and sorrow which a gracious soul must needs feel in his bosom for his sinful miscarriage, while under the temptation, will provoke him to express his love to Christ above others, as is sweetly set forth in the spouse, who when the cold fit of her distemper was off, and the temptation over, bestirs her to purpose, her lazy sickness was turned to love-sickness; she finds it as hard now to sit, as she did before to rise; she can rest in no place out of her beloved's sight but runs and asks every one she meets for him. And  
whence

whence came all this vehemency of her zeal? All occasioned her undutiful carriage to her husband: she parted so unkindly with him that (bethinking what she had done) away she goes to seek for peace. If sins committed in unregeneracy have such a force upon a gracious soul, that the thought of them, though pardoned, will still melt the heart into sorrow, and excite to shew zeal for God above others, how much more will the sins of a saint, who after sweet acquaintance with Jesus Christ lifts up the heel against that bosom where he hath lain, affect, yea, dissolve the heart as into so many drops of water, and that sorrow provoke him to serve God at a higher rate than other? No child so dutiful in all the family, as he who is returned from his rebellion.

Secondly, As his own shame, so the experience which such an one hath of Christ's love above others, will increase his love. Christ's love is fuel to ours; as it gives it being, so it affords growth; it is both mother and nurse to our love. The more Christ puts forth his love, the more heat our love gets, and next to Christ's dying love, none greater than his succouring love in temptation. The mother never hath such advantage, to shew her affection to her child, as when in distress, sick, poor, or imprisoned; so neither hath Christ to his children as when tempted, yea, worsted by temptation. When his children lie in Satan's prison, bleeding under the wounds of their consciences; this is the season he takes to give an experiment of his tender heart in pitying, his faithfulness in praying for them, his mildness in sending succour to them, yea, his dear love in visiting them by his comforting spirit. Now when the soul hath got off some great temptation, and reads the whole history thereof together, (wherein he finds what his own weakness was to resist Satan, nay, his unfaithfulness in complying with Satan, which might have provoked Christ to leave him to his fury) to see both his folly pardoned, and ruin prevented, and that by no other hand but Christ's coming in to his rescue, (as *Abishai* to *David*, 2 *Sam.* xxi. when that gaint thought to have slain him,) this must needs exceedingly endear Christ to the soul. At the reading of such records the Christian cannot but enquire, as *Ahasuerus* concerning *Mordecai*, who by discovering a treason had saved the King's life, what honour hath been done to his sweet Saviour for all this. And thus Jesus Christ, whom Satan thought to bring out of the soul's favour and liking, comes in the end to sit higher and surer in the Saint's affection than ever.

## CHAP. X.

*A brief Application of the Point in two Branches.*

Use 1. **T**HIS affords a reason why God suffers his dear children to fall into temptation, because he is able to outshoot Satan in his own bow, and in the thing wherein he thinks to outwit the Christian, to be above him. God will not only be admired by his Saints in glory for his love in their salvation, but for his wisdom in the way to it. The love of God in saving them will be the sweet draught at the marriage-feast, and the rare wisdom of God in effecting this, as the curious workmanship with which the cup shall be enamelled. Now wisdom appears most in untying of knots, and wading through difficulties. The more cross wards there are the more wisdom to fit a key to the lock, to make choice of such means as shall meet with the several turnings in the same. On purpose therefore doth God suffer such temptations to intervene, that his wisdom may be the more admired in opening all these, and leading his Saints that way to glory, by which Satan thought to have brought them to Hell. The *Israelites* are bid to *remember all the way that God led them in the wilderness for forty years*, Deut. viii. 2. The history of these wars, Christian, will be pleasant to read in Heaven, though bloody to fight on earth. *Moses* and *Elias* talked with Christ on *Tabor*, (an emblem of the sweet communion which shall pass between Christ and his Saints in glory) and what was their talk, *Luke* ix. 30. but of his death and sufferings? It seems a discourse of our sufferings and temptations are not too low a subject for that blissful state. Indeed this lett out, would make a blemish in the fair face of Heaven's glory. Could the damned forget the way they went into Hell, how oft the spirit of God was wooing, and how far they were overcome by the conviction of it; in a word, how many turns and returns there were in their journey

ney forward and backward, what possibilities, yea probabilities, they had for Heaven, when on earth; were but some hand so kind as to blot these tormenting passages out of their memories, it would ease them wonderfully. So, were it possible glorified Saints could forget the way wherein they went to glory, and the several dangers that intervined from Satan, and their own backsliding hearts, they and their God too would be losers by it, I mean in regard of his manifestive glory. What is the glory wherein God appears at *Zion's* deliverance? Those royal garments of salvation, that make him admired of men and angels? But the celebration of all his attributes, according to what every one hath done towards their salvation. Now, wisdom being that which the creature chiefly glories in, (and chosen by Satan for his first bait, who made *Eve* believe she should be like God in knowledge and wisdom) therefore God, to give Satan the more shameful fall, gives him leave to use his wits and wiles in tempting and troubling his children, in which lies his great advantage over the Saints, that so the way to his own throne (where his wisdom shall at last, as well as his merey, sit in all its royalty) may be paved with the skulls, as I may so speak, of devils.

Secondly, This gives a strong cordial to our fainting faith, in the behalf of the Church of Christ. If all the Devils wits and wiles will not serve him to overcome one single soldier in Christ's camp, much less shall he ever ruin the whole army. These are days of great confusions in the Christian world, and the chief fear of a gracious heart is for the ark, lest that should fall into the enemies hand, (and when this palladium is taken, the city of God (his church) be trod under the feet of pride) I confess Satan seems to get ground daily, he hath strangely wriggled into the bosoms and principles of many, who by the fame of their profession and zeal, had obtained in the opinion of others to be reckoned among the chief of Christ's worthies in their generation. He hath sadly corrupted the truths of Christ, brought a disesteem on ordinances, (that by this, and as a judgment for this, the womb of the gospel is become in a great measure barren, and her children which hang about her breasts thrive not in love and holiness as of old, when the milk was not so much nor that so spiritual) he hath had advantage by the divisions of the godly, to harden those that are wicked into further disdain



disdain of religion, and by the bloody wars of late years, to boil up the wrath of the popish and profane crew to a higher pitch of rage and fury against Christ's little remnant than ever; so that if ever God should suffer the sword to fall into their hand, they are disciplined and fitted to play the bloody butchers on Christ's sheep above their fore-fathers, neither are they so crest-fallen, but that they can hope for such a day, yea, take up some of those joys upon trust aforehand to solace themselves. And now, Christian, may be their confidence, together with the distracted state of Christ's affairs in the world, may discompose thy spirit, concerning the issue of these rolling providences that are over our heads; but be still, poor heart, and know, that the contest is not between the Church and Satan, but between Christ and him; these are the two champions. Stand now, O ye army of Saints, still by faith, to see the all-wise God wrestle with the subtle Devil. If you live not to see the period of these great confusions, yet generations after you shall behold the Almighty smite off this *Goliath's* head with his own sword, and take this cunning hunter in the toil of his own policies, that faith which ascribes greatness and wisdom to God, will shrink up Satan's subtilty into a *nigrum nihil*, a thing of nothing. *Increduli timent diabolum, quasi leonem, qui fide fortes despiciunt quasi vermiculum. Bern.* Unbelief fears Satan as a lion, faith treads on him, as a worm. Behold therefore thy God at work, and promise thyself, that what he is about will be an excellent piece; none can drive him from his work. The pilot is beaten from the helm and can do little in a storm, but let the ship go adrift. The architect cannot work when night draws the curtain, yea, is driven off the scaffold with a storm of rain; such workmen are wisest counsellors, and mightiest Princes on earth. A pinch may come, when it is as vain to say, Help O King, as, Help O beggar; man's wisdom may be levelled with folly, but God is never interrupted. All the plots of Hell and commotions on earth, have not so much as shaken God's hand, to spoil one letter or line that he hath been drawing. The mysteriousness of his providence may hang a curtain before his work, that we cannot see what he is doing; then, *when darkness is about him, righteousness is the seat of his throne for ever.* O where is our faith (Sirs!) let God be wise, and all men and Devils fools. What, though thou

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see as Babel more likely to go up, than a Babylon to be to be pulled down, yet believe God is making his secret approaches, and will clap his ladders on a sudden to the walls thereof.

Suppose truth were prisoner with Joseph, and error the courtier, to have its head lift up by the favour of the times, yet dost not remember, that the way to truth's preferment, lies through the prison; yea, what though the church were like Jonah in the whale's belly, swallowed up to the eye of reason, by the fury of men; yet dost not remember the whale had not power to digest the prophet? O be not too quick to bury the church before she be dead. Stay while Christ tries his skill before you give it over; bring Christ by your prayers to its grave, to speak a resurrection word. Admirable hath the Saints faith been in such straights; as Joseph's, who pawned his bones that God would visit his brethren, willing them to lay him where he believed they should be brought.

Jeremiah purchaseth a field of his uncle, and pays down the money for it, and this when the Chaldean army quartered about Jerusalem, ready to take the city, and carry him with the rest into Babylon: and all this by God's appointment, Jer. xxii. 6, 7, 8. that he might shew the Jews by this, how undoubtedly he (in that sad juncture of time) did believe the performance of the promise for their return out of captivity. Indeed God counts himself exceedingly disparaged in the thoughts of his people, (though at the lowest ebb of his church's affairs) if his naked word, and the single bond of his promise, will not be taken as sufficient security to their faith for its deliverance.

## VERSE XII.

*For we wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities and Powers, against the Rulers or the Darkness of this World, against spiritual Wickedness in high Places.*

THESE words are coupled to the preceding with that casual particle *For*, which either refers to the two foregoing verses, and then they are a further reason, pressing the necessity of Christian fortitude in the tenth verse, and furniture in the eleventh; or else to the last words of the eleventh verse, where the Apostle having described the Saint's grand enemy to be Satan, and described him in one of his attributes, his wily subtilty, he in this, farther displays him in his proper colours, not to weaken the Saint's hands, but it wakes their care, that seeing their enemy marching up in a full body, they might stand in better order to receive his charge. Where by the way, we may observe the Apostle's simplicity and plain dealing; he doth not undervalue the strength of the enemy, and represent him inconsiderable, as Captains use to keep their Soldiers together by slighting the power of their adversary; no, he tells them the worst at first. If Satan had been to set out his own power, he could have challenged no more than is here granted him. See here the difference between Christ dealing with his followers, and Satan with his.

Satan dares not let sinners know who that God is they fight against; this were enough to breed a mutiny in the Devil's camp. Silly souls, they are drawn into the field by a false report of God and his ways, and they are kept there together with lies and fair tales, but Christ is not afraid to shew his Saints their enemy in all his power and principality, the weakness of God, being stronger than the powers of Hell.

## CHAP. I.

*Sheweth, the Christain's Life here to be a continual Wrestling with Sin and Satan, and the Paucity of those who are true Wrestlers, as also how the true Wrestlers should manage their Combat.*

**T**HE words contain a lively description of a bloody and lasting war between the Christian and his implacable enemy, in which we may observe,

First, The Christian's state in this life, set out by this word *Wrestling*.

Secondly, The Assailants that appear in arms against the Christian, who are described; First, Negatively, *Not flesh and blood*: Or rather comparatively, not chiefly flesh and blood. Secondly, Positively, *but against Principalities, Powers, &c.*

## SECT. I.

For the first, the wrestling or conflicting state of a Christian in this life, is rendered observable here by a three-fold circumstance.

First, The kind of combat which the Christian's state is here set out by, which though it be used sometimes for a wrestling of sport and recreation, yet here to set out the sharpness of the Christian's encounter; there are two things in wrestling that render it a sharper combat than others.

First, Wrestling is not properly fighting against a multitude, but when one enemy singles out another, and enters the list with him, each exerting their whole force and strength against one another, as David and Goliath, when the whole

whole armies stood as it were in a ring to behold the bloody issue of that duel. Now this is more fierce than to fight in an army, where though the battle be sharp and long, the soldier is not always engaged, but files off when he hath discharged, and takes breath; yea, possibly may escape without hurt or stroke, because there the enemy's aim is not at this or that man, but at the whole heap; but in wrestling one cannot escape so, he being the particular object of the enemy's fury, must needs be shaken and tried to purpose. Indeed the word signifies such a strife, as makes the body shake again. Satan hath not only a general malice against the whole army of Saints, but a spite against thee John, thee Joan: He will single thee out for his enemy. We find Jacob when alone a man wrestled with. As God delights to have private communion with his single Saints, so the Devil to try hand to hand with the Christian, when he gets him alone.

As we lose much comfort, when we do not apply the promise and providence of God to our particular persons and conditions; God loves me, pardons me, takes care of me; the water at the town-conduit doth me no good, if I want a pipe to empty it into my cistern; so it obstructs our care and watchfulness, when we conceive of Satan's wrath and fury, as bent in general against the Saints, and not against me in particular. O how careful would a soul be in duty, in going to church or closet, had he such a serious meditation as this. Now Satan is at my heels to hinder me in my work, if my God help me not!

Secondly, 'Tis a close combat. Armies fight at some distance, wrestlers grapple hand to hand. An arrow shot from afar, may be seen and shunned, but when the enemy hath hold of one, there is no declining, but either he must resist manfully, or fall shamefully at his enemy's feet. Satan comes close up, and gets within the Christian, takes his hold of his very flesh and corrupt nature, and by this shakes him.

Secondly, The universality of the combat. *We* wrestle, which comprehends all, on purpose you may perceive the Apostle changeth the pronoun *ye*, in the former verse, into *wē* in this, that he may include himself as well as them; as if he had said, the quarrel is with every Saint. Satan neither  
fears

fears to assault the Minister, nor despiseth to wrestle with the meanest Saint in the congregation, great and small, Minister and people, all must wrestle: Not one part of Christ's army in the field, and the other at ease in their quarters, where no enemy comes, here are enemies enough to engage all at once.

Thirdly, The permanency or duration of this combat, and that lies in the tense. Not, our wrestling *was* at first conversion, but now over, and we past the Pikes; not, we *shall* wrestle when sickness comes, and death comes, but our wrestling *is*, the enemy is ever in sight of us, yea, in fight with us, there is an evil of every day's temptation, which (like *Paul's* bonds) abides us wherever we be come. So that these particulars summed up, will amount to this point:

## SECT. II.

*Doct.* The Christian's life is a continual wrestling. He is, as *Jeremiah* said of himself, born *a man of strife*; or what the Prophet said to *Asa*, may be said to every Christian; *From hence thou shalt have war*, from thy spiritual birth to thy natural death, from the hour when thou first didst set thy face to Heaven, till thou shalt set thy foot in Heaven. *Israel's* march out of *Egypt* was in gospel-sense, our taking the field against sin and Satan; and when had they peace? not till they lodged their colours in *Canaan*. *No condition* wherein the Christian here below is quiet.

Is it prosperity or adversity? here is work for both hands, to keep pride and security down in the one, faith and patience up in the other; no place, which the Christian can call privileged ground. *Lot* in *Sodom* wrestled with the wicked inhabitants thereof, his *righteous soul being vexed with their unclean conversation*. And how fares he at *Zour*? Do not his own daughters bring a spark of *Sodom's* fire into his own bed, whereby he is inflamed with lust? Some have thought if they were but in such family, under such a Ministry, out of such occasions. O then they should never be tempted as now they are: I confess change of air is a great help to weak nature; but thinkest thou to fly from Satan's presence thus?

thus? No, though thou shouldest take the wings of the morning, he would fly after thee; these may make him change his method in tempting, but not lay down his design; so long as his old friend is alive within, he will be knocking at the door without. *No Duty* can be performed without wrestling: The Christian needs his sword as much as his trowel. He wrestles with a body of flesh; this to the Christian in duty is as the beast to the traveller; he cannot go his journey without it, and much ado to go with it. If the flesh be kept high and lusty, then 'tis wanton, and will not obey; if low, then it is weak, and soon tires. Thus the Christian rides but little ground, because he must go his weak body's pace. He wrestles with a body of sin as well as of flesh, this mutters and murmurs when the soul is taking up any duty. Sometimes it keeps the Christian from duty, so that he cannot do what he would. As *Paul* said, *I would have come once and again, but Satan hindered me.* I would have prayed, may the Christian say, at such a time, and meditated on the word I heard, the mercies I received at another, but this enemy hindered. 'Tis true indeed, Grace sways the sceptre in such a soul, yet as school-boys taking their time when their Master is abroad, do shut him out, and for a while lord it, though they are whipt for it afterward; thus the unregenerate part takes advantage when grace is not on its watch, to disturb its government, and shut it out from duty; though this last makes the soul more severe in mortifying, yet it costs some scuffle before it can recover its throne, and when it cannot slip from duty, yet then is the Christian wofully yoked with it in duty; it cannot do what it doth as it would; many a letter in its copy doth this enemy spoil, while he jogs him with impertinent thoughts; when the Christian is praying, then Satan and the flesh are a prating; he cries, and they louder, to put him out, or drown his cry. Thus we see the Christian is assailed on every side by his enemy; and how can it be other, when the seeds of war are laid deep in the natures of both, which can never be rooted up till the Devil cease to be a Devil, sin to be sin, and the Saint to be a Saint? Though Wolves may snarl at one another, yet soon are quiet again, because the quarrel is not in their nature; but the wolf and the lamb can never be made friends. Sin will lust against grace, and grace draw upon sin whenever they meet.

## S E C T. III.

*Use 1.* This may reprove such as wrestle; but against whom? against God; not against Sin and Satan. These are bold men indeed, who dare try a fall with the Almighty; yet such they are, and a woe pronounced against them, *Isa. xlv. 9. Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker.* 'Tis easy to tell which of these will be worsted. What can he do, but break his shins, that dasheth them against a rock? A goodly battle there is like to be, when thorns contest with fire, and stubble with flame. But where live those Giants, that dare enter the list with the great God? What are their names, that we may know them, and brand them for creatures above all other unworthy to live? take heed, O thou who askest, that the wretched man whom thou seemest so to defy, be not found in thine own clothes itself. *Judas* was the traitor, though he would not answer to his name, but put it off with a *Master, is it I?* and so mayest thou be the fighter against God. The heart is deceitful. Even holy *David*, for all his anger was so hot against the rich man, that took away the poor man's ewe-lamb, that he bound it with an oath, the man should not live who had done it, yet proves at last to be himself the man, as the Prophet told him, *2 Sam. xii.*

Now there are two ways wherein men wrestle against God: First, When they wrestle against his Spirit. Secondly, When they wrestle against his Providence.

First, When they wrestle against his Spirit. We read of the Spirit's striving with the Creature, *Gen. vi. 3. My Spirit shall not always strive with man.* Where the striving is not in anger and wrath to destroy them, (that God could do without any stir or scuffle) but a loving strife and contest with man. The old world was running with such a career headlong into their ruin, he sends his Spirit to interpose, and by his counsels and reproofs to offer, as it were, to stop and reclaim them. As if one seeing another ready to offer violence on himself, should strive to get the knife out of his hand, with which he would do the mischief: Or one that hath a purse of gold in his hand to give, should follow another by all manner of entreaties, striving with him to accept and



and take it. Such a kind of strife is this of the Spirit's with men. They are the lusts of men, that the holy Spirit strives by sweet counsels and entreaties to get out of our hands. They are Christ's, his grace and eternal life he strives to make us accept at the hands of God's mercy; and for repulsing the Spirit thus striving with them, sinners are justly counted fighters against God: *Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost*, Acts vii. 51. Now there is twofold striving of the Spirit, and so of our wresling against it.

First, The Spirit strives in his Messengers with sinners: They coming on his errand, and not their own, he voucheth the faithful counsels, reproofs, and exhortations, which they give as his own act. *Noah*, that *Preacher of righteousness*, what he said to the old world, is called, *the preaching of the Spirit*, 1 Pet. iii. 19. The pains that *Moses*, *Aaron*, and other servants of God took in instructing *Israel*, is called the instruction of the Spirit, *Nehem.* ix. 20. So that when the word, which God's Ministers bring in his name, is rejected, the faithful counsels they give are thrown at sinners heels, and made light of, then do they strive with the Spirit, and wrestle against Christ as really, as if he visibly, in his own person, had been in the pulpit, and preached the sermon to them. When God comes to reckon with sinners, it will prove so; then God will rub up your memories, and mind you of his striving with you, and your unkind resiting him. *They, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, shall know they had a Prophet among them*, Ezek. ii. 5. Now men soon forget whom and what they hear; ask them what was prest upon their conscience in such a sermon, they have forgot; what were the precious truths laid out in another, and they are lost; and well were it for them, if their memories were no better in another world; it would ease their torments more than a little. But when they shall know they had a Prophet among them, and what a price they had with him in their hands, though it was in fools keeping. They shall know what he was, and what he said, though a thousand years past, as fresh as if it were done but last night.

The more zealous and compassionate, the more painful and powerful he was in his place, the greater shall their sin be found, to break from such holy violence offered to do

them good. Surely God will have something for the sweat, yea, lives of his servants, which were worn out in striving with such rebellious ones. May be yet, sinners, your firmament is clear, no cloud to be seen that portends a storm; but know (as you use to say) winter does not rot in the clouds, you shall have it at last; every threatening which your faithful Ministers have denounced against you out of the word, God is bound to make good. *He confirmeth the word of his Servant, and performeth the counsel of his Messengers*, Isa. xlv. 21. and that in judgment against sinners, confirming the threatenings, as well as in mercy performing the promises, which they declare as the portion of his children. But it will be time enough to ask such on a sick bed, or a dying hour, whether the words of the Lord delivered by their faithful Preachers, have not taken hold of them. Some have confessed with horror they have, as the Jews, *Zech. i. 6. Like as the Lord of Hosts thought to do unto us, so hath he dealt with us.* Secondly, the Spirit strives with men more immediately, when he takes his inward approaches to to the consciences of men, debating in their own bosoms the case with them; one while he shews them their sins in their bloody colours, and whither they will surely bring them, if not looked to timely, which he doth so convincingly, that the creature smells sometimes the very fire and brimstone about him, and is at present in a temporal Hell; another while he falls a parlying and treating with them, making gracious overtures to the sinner, if he will return at his reproof, presents the grace of the Gospel, and opens a door of hope for his recovery, yea, falls a wooing and beseeching of him to throw down his rebellious arms, and come to Christ for life, whose heart is in a present disposition to receive and embrace the first motion the returning sinner makes for mercy. Now when the Spirit of God follows the sinner from place to place, and time to time, suggesting such motions, and renewing his old suit, and the creature shall fling out of the Spirit's hands thus striving with him, *re infecta*, as far from renouncing his lusts, or taking any liking to Christ as ever; this is to resist the Spirit to his face, and it carries so much malignity in it, that (even where it hath not been final) poor humbled souls have been upset with horror of it, that they could not for a long time be persuaded, but that it was unpardonable sin.

Take

Take heed therefore sinners, how you use the Spirit when he comes, knocking at the door of your hearts: Open at his knock, and he will be your guest, you shall have his sweet company; repulse him, and you have not a promise he will knock again. And if once he leave striving with thee, unhappy man, thou art lost for ever; thou liest like a ship cast up by the waves upon some high rock, where the tide never comes to fetch it off. Thou mayest come to the word, converse with other ordinances, but in vain. 'Tis the Spirit of them which is both tide and wind, to set the soul afloat, and carry it on, or else it lies like a ship on dry ground which stirs not.

Secondly, We wrestle against God when we wrestle with his providence, and that two ways; First when we are discontented with his providential dispose of us. God's carving for us, doth not please us, but we are objecting against his dealings towards, at least muttering something with the fool in our hearts, which God hears as lightly as man our words. God counts, then we begin to quarrel with him, when we do not acquiesce in, say amen to his providence, whatever it is. He calls it a *contending with the Almighty*, Job. xl. 2. *yea, a reproving of God*. And he is a bold man sure that dare find fault with God, and article against Heaven.

God challengeth him, whoever he is, that doth this, to answer at his peril. *He that reproveth God, let him answer it*. It was high time for Job to have done, when he hears what a sense God puts upon those unwary words, which dropt from him in the anguish of his spirit, and paroxism of his sufferings; contend with the Almighty? Reprove God? Good man, how blank he is, and cries out, *I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth*. Let God but pardon what is past, and he shall hear such language no more. O Sirs, take heed of this wrestling above all others. Contention is uncomfortable, with whomsoever we fall out. Neighbours or friends, wife or husband, children or servants; but worst of all with God. If God cannot please thee, but thy heart riseth against him, what hopes are there of thy pleasing him, who will take nothing kindly from that man who is angry with him? And how can love to God be preserved in a discontented heart, that is  
always

always muttering against him? Love cannot think any evil of God, nor endure any to speak evil of him, but it must take God's part, as Jonathan, David's, when Saul spake basely of him; and when it cannot be heard, will, like him, arise and be gone. When afflicted, love can allow thee to groan, but not to grumble. If thou wilt ease thy incumbered spirit into God's bosom by prayer, and humbly wrestle with God on thy knees, love is for thee, and will help thee to the best arguments thou canst use to God: But if thou wilt vent thy distempered passions, and shew a mutinous spirit against God, this stabs it to the heart.

Secondly, We wrestle against providence, when incorrigible under the various dispensations of God towards us. Providence has a voice, if we had an ear; mercies should draw, afflictions drive; now when neither fair means nor foul do us good, but we are impenitent under both, this is to wrestle against God with both hands. Each of these have their peculiar aggravations. One is against love, and so disingenuous; the other is against the smart of his rod, and therein we slight his anger, and are cruel to ourselves in kicking against the pricks. Mercy should make us ashamed, wrath afraid to sin. He that is not ashamed, has not the spirit of man.

He that is not afraid when smitten, is worse than a beast, who stands in awe of whip and spur. Sometimes mercy (especially these outward mercies, which have a pleasing relish to the carnal part in a Christian) hath proved a snare to the best of men: But then affliction useth to recover them; but when affliction makes men worse, and they harden themselves against God, to sin more and more while the rod is on them, what it like to reclaim them? Few are made better by prosperity, whom afflictions make worse. He that will sin, though he goes in pain, will much more if that once be gone. But take heed of thus contesting with God. There is nothing got by scuffling with God, but blows, or worse. If he say he will afflict thee no more, 'tis even the worse he can say; 'tis as much as if he should say, he will be in thy debt till another world, and there pay thee altogether. But if he means thee mercy, thou shalt hear from him in some sharper affliction than ever. He hath wedges that can rive thee, wert thou a more knotty piece than thou art. *Are there  
yet*

*yet the treasures of wickedness, and the scant measure that is abominable?* (saith God to Israel, Micah vi. 10.) what incorrigible, though the Lord's voice crieth unto the city, bidding you hear the rod, and him that hath appointed it? See what course God resolves on, v. 13. *Therefore I will make thee sick in smiting of thee.* As if he had said, my other physic I see was too weak, it did not work to turn your stomach, but I will prepare a potion that shall make you sick at heart.

Secondly, It reproves those who seem to wrestle against sin, not according to the word of command that Christ gives. There is a law in wrestling which must be observed, 2 Tim. ii. 5. *If a man also strive for mastery, yet he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully.* He alludes to the Roman games, to which there were judges appointed to see that no foul play were offered contrary to the law for wrestling; the prize being denied to such, though they did foil their adversary, which the Apostle improves to make the Christian careful in his war, as being under a stricter law and discipline, that requires not only valour to fight, but obedience to fight, by order, and according to the word of command: Now few do this that go for great Wrestlers.

First, Some while they wrestle against one sin embrace another; and in that case, 'tis not the person wrestles against sin, but one sin wresles with another, and 'tis no wonder to see thieves fall out when they come to divide the spoil; lusts are divers, Tit. iii. 3. and 'tis hard to please many Masters, especially when their commands are so contrary; when pride bids lay on in bravery, lavish out in entertainment, covetousness bids lay up; when malice bids revenge, carnal policy saith, conceal thy wrath, though not forgive.—When lust sends to his whores, hypocrisy pulls him back for shame of the world. Now is he God's champion that resists one sin at the command of another.

Secondly, Some wrestle, but they are prest into the field, not as Volunteers, their slavish fear scares them at present from their lust, so that the combat is rather betwixt their conscience and will, than them and their lust: Give me such a sin, saith will; no, saith conscience, it will seald, and throws it away. A man may love the wine, though he is loth to have his lips burnt; *Hypocrites themselves are afraid to burn.*

In

In such combats the will at last prevails, either by bribing the understanding to present the lust it desires in a more pleasing dress (that conscience may not be scared with such hedious apparitions of wrath) or by pacifying conscience with some promise of repentance for the future, or by forbearing some sin for the present, which it can best spare; thereby to gain the reputation of something like a reformation; or if all this will not do, then (prompted by the fury of its lust) the will proclaims open war against conscience, sinning in the face of it, like some wild horse (impatient of the spur which pricks him, and bridle that curbs him) gets the bit between his teeth, and runs with full speed, till at last he caseth himself of his rider; and then where he sees fattest pasture, no hedge or ditch can withhold him, till in the end you find him starving in some pound for his trespass: Thus many sin at such rate, that conscience can no longer hold the reins, nor sit the saddle, but is thrown down and laid for dead; and then the wretches range where their lusts can take the fullest meal, till at last they pay for their stolen pleasures most dearly, when conscience comes to itself, pursues them, and takes them more surely by the throat than ever, never to let them go till it brings them before God's tribunal.

Thirdly, Others wrestle with sin, but they do not hate it, and therefore they are favourable to it, and seek not the life of sin as their deadly enemy; these wrestle in jest, and not in earnest; the wounds they give sin one day are healed by the next.

Let men resolve never so strongly against sin, yet it will creep again into their favour, till the love of sin be quenched in the heart, and this fire will never die of itself, the love of Christ, as Jerome excellently, *Unus amor extinguit alium*. This heavenly fire will indeed put out that flame of Hell, which he illustrates by Abashuerus's carriage to Vashti, his Queen, who in the first chapter makes a decree in all haste, that she come no more before him; but when his passion is a little down, c. 2. v. 1. he begins to relent towards her, which his council perceiving, presently seek out for a beautiful virgin, on whom the King might place his love, and take into his royal bed, which done, we hear no more of Vashti; then, and not till then, will the soul's decree stand against sin, when the soul hath taken Christ into his bosom.

SECT.

## SECT. IV.

Secondly, To the Saints, seeing your life is a continual wrestling here on earth, 'tis your wisdom to study how you may best manage the combat with your worst enemy ; which that you may do, take these few directions.

First, Look thou goest not into the field without thy second ; my meaning is, engage God by prayer to stand at thy back ; God is in a league offensive and defensive with thee, but he looks to be called. Did the Ephraimites take it ill, that Gideon called them not into the field, and may not God much more ? As if thou meanest to steal a victory before he should know it. Thou hast more valour than Moses, who would not stir without God ; no, though he sent an Angel for his Lieutenant.

Thou art wiser than Jacob, who to overcome Esau, now marching up, turns from him, and falls upon God ; he knew if he could wrestle with God, he might trust God to deal with his brother. Engage God, and the back-door is shut, no enemy can come behind thee ; yea, thine enemy shall fall before thee. *God turn the counsel of Ahitophel into foolishness*, saith David ; Heaven saith amen to his prayer, and the wretch hangs himself.

Secondly, Be very careful of giving thy enemy hand-hold. Wrestlers strive to fasten upon some part or other, which gives them advantage more easily to throw their adversary ; to prevent which, they used, First, to lay aside their garments. Secondly, to anoint their bodies. For the first, Christian, labour to put off the old man, which is most personal ; that corruption, which David calls his own iniquity, Psalm xviii. 23. This is the skirt which Satan lays hold of ; observe what it is, and mortify it daily, then Satan will retreat with shame, when he sees the head of that enemy upon the wall, which should have betrayed thee into his hands.

Secondly, The Roman wrestlers used to anoint their bodies ; so do thou : Bathe thy soul with the frequent meditation of Christ's love. Satan will find little welcome where

Christ's love dwells; love will kindle love, and that will be as a wall of fire to keep off Satan, it will make thee disdain the offer of sin, and as oil, supple thy joints, and make thee active, to offend thy enemy. Think how Christ wrestles in thy quarrel! Sin, Hell, and Wrath, had all come full mouth upon thee, had he not coped with them in the way — And canst thou find in thy heart to requite his love, by betraying his glory into the hands of sin, by cowardice or treachery? Say not thou lovest him, so long as thou canst lay those sins in thy bosom, which plucked his heart out of his bosom. It were strange if a child should keep, and delight to use no other knife, but wherewith his father was stabbed.

Thirdly, Improve the advantage thou gettest at any time wisely. Sometimes the Christian hath his enemy on the hip, yea, on the ground, can set his foot on the very neck of his pride, and throw away his unbelief, as a thing absurd and unreasonable; now (as a wise wrestler) fall with all thy weight upon thine enemy; though a man think it foul play to strike when his adversary is down, yet do not thou so compliment with sin, as to let it breathe or rise. Take heed thou art not charged of God, as Ahab was, for letting go this enemy now in thy hands, whom God hath appointed to destruction. Learn a little wisdom of the Serpent's brood, who when they had Christ under their foot, never thought they had him sure enough; no, not when dead, and therefore, both seal and watch his grave. Thus do you, to hinder the resurrection of thy sin, seal it down with stronger purposes, solemn covenants, and watch it by a wakeful circumspect walking.

*Use 3.* This is the ground of consolation to the weak Christian, who disputes against the truth of his grace, from the inward conflicts and fightings he hath with his lusts, and is ready to say (like Gideon, in regard of outward enemies) *If God be with me, why is all this befallen me?* Why do I find such strugglings in me, provoking me to sin, pulling me back from that which is good? Why, ask. The answer is soon given, because thou art a Wrestler, not a Conqueror. Thou mistakest the state of a Christian in this life; when one is made a Christian, he is not presently called to triumph over his slain enemies, but carried into the field to meet and fight them. The state of grace is the  
commencing



commencing of a war against sin, not the ending of it; rather than thou shalt not have an enemy to wrestle with, God himself will come in a disguise into the field, and appear to be thine enemy. Thus when Jacob was alone, a man wrestled with him until the break of day, and therefore set thy heart at rest if this be thy scruple: Thy soul may rather take comfort in this, that thou art a wrestler; this struggling within thee, if upon the right ground, and to the right end, doth evidence there are two nations within thee, two contrary natures; the one from earth, earthly; and the other from Heaven, heavenly; yea, for thy further comfort know, though thy corrupt nature be the elder, yet it shall serve the younger.

*Use 4.* O how should this make thee (Christian) long to be gone home, where there is none of this stir and scuffle! 'Tis strange, that every hour seems not a day, and every day a year, till death sounds thy joyful retreat, and calls thee off the field, where the bullets fly so thick, and thou art fighting for thyself with thy deadly enemies, to come to court, where not swords, but palms are seen in the Saints hands; not drums, but harps; not groans of bleeding soldiers and wounded consciences, but sweet and ravishing music is heard of triumphing victors, singing the praises of God and the LAMB, through whom they have overcome.

Well, Christians, while you are below, comfort yourselves with these these things; there is a rest remains for the people of God: You do not beat the air, but wrestle for a Heaven that is yonder above those clouds; you have your worst first, the best will follow. You wrestle but to win a crown, and win to wear it, yea wear, never to lose it, which once on, none shall take off, or put you to the hazard of a battle more. Here we overcome to fight again, the battle of one temptation may be over, but the war remains. What peace can we have, as long as Devils can come abroad out of their holes, or any thing of sinful nature remains in ourselves unmortified, which will even fight upon its knees, and strike with one arm while the other is cut off; but when death comes, the last stroke is struck; this good physician will perfectly cure thee of thy spiritual blindness and lameness (as the Martyr told his fellow at the stake, bloody Bonner would do their bodies.) What is it, Christian, which takes

takes way the joy of thy life, but the wrestlings and combats which this bosom enemy puts thee to? Is not this the Peninnah, that vexing and disturbing thy spirit, hath kept thee from many a sweet meal, thou mightest have had in communion with God and his Saints? Or if thou hast come, hath made thee cover the altar of God with thy tears? And will it not be a happy hand, that cuts the knot, and sets thee loose from thy deadness, hypocrisy, pride, &c. wherewith thou wast yoked? It is life which is thy loss, and death which is thy gain.

Be but willing to endure the rending of the vail of thy flesh, and thou art where thou would be, out of the reach of sin, at rest in the bosom of thy God. And why should a short evil of pain affright thee more, than the deliverance from a continual torment of sin's evil, ravish thee? Some you know have chose to be cut, rather than to be ground daily with the stone, and yet, may be their pain comes again; and can thou not quietly think of dying to be delivered from the torment of thy sins, never to return more? and yet that is not the half that death doth for thee: Peace is sweet after war, ease after pain; but what tongue can express what joy, what glory must fill the creature at the first sight of God, and that blessed company? None but one that dwells there can tell. Did we know more of that blissful state, we ministers would find it as hard work to persuade Christians to be willing to live here so long, as now it is to persuade them to be willing to die so soon.

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## CHAP. II.

*Wherein is shewed what is meant by Flesh and Blood; how the Christian doth not, and how he doth wrestle against the same.*

### SECT. I.

**N**OW follows the description of the Saint's enemies, with whom he is to wrestle.

First, Described negatively, *Not with flesh and blood.*

Secondly; Positively, *But against principalities, and powers, &c.*

First, For the negative part of the description; we are not to take it for a pure negation, as if we had no conflict with flesh and blood, but wholly and solely to engage against Satan; but by way of comparison, not only with flesh and blood, and in some sense not chiefly. It is usual in scripture such manner of phrases, *Luke xiv. 12 Call not thy friends to dinner, but the poor;* that is, not only those so as to neglect the poor. Now what is meant here by flesh and blood? There is a double interpretation of the words.

First, By flesh and blood may be meant our bosom corruptions; that sin which is in our corrupt nature so often called flesh in the scripture; *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit,* and sometimes flesh and blood, as *Matt. xvi. 17. Flesh and blood hath not revealed this,* that is, this confession thou hast made comes from above; thy fleshly corrupt mind could never have found out this supernatural truth, thy sinful will would never have embraced it. So, *1 Cor. xv. 20. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,* that is, sinful mortal flesh, as it is expounded in the words following. So, *Gal. i. 16. I consulted not with flesh and blood,* that is, carnal reason. Now this bosom enemy may be called flesh, partly from its derivation, and partly from its operation: from its derivation, because it is derived and propagated to us by natural generation; thus *Adam* is said to beget a son *in his own likeness,* sinful as he was, as well as mortal and miserable; yea, the holiest Saint on earth, having flesh in him, communicates this corrupt and sinful nature to his child, as the circumcised Jew begat an uncircumcised child; and the wheat cleansed and fan'd, being sown, comes up with a husk, *John iii. 6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh.*

Secondly, It is called flesh from the operations of this corrupt nature, which are fleshly and carnal. The reasonings of the corrupt mind fleshly, therefore called the carnal mind, incapable indeed of the things of God, which it neither doth nor can perceive; as the sun doth *obscurare superiora dum revelat inferiora;* hide the Heavens which are above it from us, while it reveals things beneath; so carnal reason leaves the creature in the dark, concerning spiritual truths, when it is most able to conceive and discourse of creature-excellencies,

excellencies, and carnal interests here below. What a childish question, for so wise a man, did *Nicodemus* put to Christ? though Christ to help him did wrap his speech in a carnal phrase. If fleshly reason cannot understand spiritual truths when thus accommodated, and the notions of the Gospel translated into its own language, what skill is it like to have of them, if put to read them in their original tongue? I mean, if this garment of carnal expression were taken off, and spiritual truths in their naked hue presented to its view. The motions of the natural will are carnal, and therefore, *Rom. viii. 5. They that are after the flesh*, are said to *mind the things of the flesh*. All its desires, delights, cares, fears, are in and of carnal things; it savours spiritual food no more than an Angel fleshly. *Omnis vita gustu ducitur*: What we cannot relish we will hardly make our daily food. Every creature hath its proper diet, the lion eat not grass, nor the horse flesh; what is food to the carnal heart, is poison to the gracious; and that which is pleasing to the gracious, is distasteful to the carnal. Now according to this interpretation the sense of the Apostle is not, as if the Christian had no combat with his corrupt nature (for in another place it is said, the spirit lusts against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit, and this enemy is called the sin that besets the Christian round) but to aggravate his conflict with this enemy by the access of a foreign power, Satan, who strikes it with this domestic enemy. As if while a King is fighting with his own mutinous subjects, some out-landish troops should join with them, now he may be said not to fight with his subjects, but with a foreign power.

The Christian wrestles not with his naked corruptions, but with Satan in them; were there no Devil, yet we should have our hands full in resisting the corruptions of our own hearts; but the access of this enemy makes the battle more terrible, because he heads them who is a Captain so skilful and experienced. Our sin is the engine, Satan is the engineer, lust the bait, Satan the angler: When a soul is enticed by his own lust, he is said to be tempted, *Jam. i. 14.* because both Satan and our own lust concur to the completing the sin.

Use First, Let this make thee, Christian, ply the work of mortification close; it is no policy to let thy lusts have arms, who are sure to rise and declare against thee when thine enemy

emy comès. *Achish's* Nobles did wisely, in that they would not trust *David* in their army when to fight against *Israel*, lest in the battle he should be an Adversary to them: And darest thou go to duty, or engage in any action, where Satan will appear against thee, and not endeavour to make sure of thy pride, unbelief, &c. that they join not with thine enemy?

Secondly, Are Satan and thine own flesh against thee, not single corruption, but edged with his policy, and backed by his power? See then what need thou hast of more help than thy own grace; take heed of grappling with him in the strength of thy naked grace; here thou hast two to one against thee. Satan was too hard for *Adam*, though he went so well appointed into the field, because left to himself; much more easily will he foil thee; cling therefore about thy God for strength, get him with thee, and then, though a worm, thou shalt be able to deal with this serpent.

## SECT. II.

Secondly, Flesh and blood is interpreted as paraphrase of man. We wrestle not with flesh and blood, that is, not with man, who is here described by that part which chiefly distinguisheth him from the angelical nature: *Touch me*, saith Christ, *and handle me, a spirit hath not flesh*. Now according to this interpretation observe;

First, How meanly the Spirit of God speaks of man.

Secondly, Where he lays the stress of the Saint's battle, not in resisting flesh and blood, but principalities and powers; where the Apostle excludes not our combat with man, for the war is against the Serpent and his seed. As wide as the world is, it cannot peaceably hold the Saints and wicked together; but his intent is to shew, what a complicated enemy (man's wrath and Satan's interwoven together) we have to deal with.

First, For the first, How meanly doth the Spirit of God speak of man, calling him flesh and blood? Man hath a heaven-born soul, which makes him a-kin to Angels, yea, to the God of them who is the Father of Spirits; but this is passed by in silence, as if God would not own that which is tainted with sin, and not the creature God at first made it;

or because the soul, though of such noble extraction, yet being so immersed in sensuality, deserves no other name than flesh, which part of man levels him with the beast, and is here intended to express the weakness and frailty of man's nature. It is a phrase by which the Holy Ghost expresses the weakness and impotency of a creature, *Isa.* xxxi. 3. *They are men, and their horses are flesh*, that is, weak; on the contrary, when he would set out the power and strength of a thing, he opposeth it to flesh, *2 Cor.* x, 3. *Our weapons are not carnal, but mighty*; and so in the text, not flesh and blood, but powers. As if he should say, Had you no other to fear but a weak sorry man, it were not worth the providing arms or ammunition; but you have enemies that neither are flesh, nor are resisted with flesh; so that here we see what a weak creature man is, not only weaker than Angels, as they are spirits, and he flesh, but in some sense beneath the beasts, as the flesh of man is frailer than the flesh of beasts; therefore the Spirit of God compares man to the grass, which soon *withers*, *Isa.* xl. 6. and his *goodliness to the flower of the field*. Yea, he is called vanity, *Psal.* lxxii. 9. *Men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie*, both alike vain; only the rich and the great man, his vanity is covered with honour, wealth, &c. which are here called a lie, because they are not what they seem, and so worse than plain vanity, which is known to be so, and deceives not.

*Use.* First. Is man but frail flesh? let this humble thee; O man, in all thy excellency, flesh is but one remove from filth and corruption; thy soul is the salt that keeps thee sweet, or else thou would stink above ground. Is it thy beauty thou primest in? Flesh is grass, but beauty is the vanity of this vanity. This goodliness is like the flower, which lasts not so long as the grass, appears in its month, and is gone; yea, like the beauty of the flower, which fades while the flower stands. How soon will time's plough make furrows in thy face; yea, one fit of the ague will so change thy countenance, as shall make thy doting lovers afraid to look on thee? Is it strength? alas, it is an arm of flesh, which withers often in the stretching forth; 'ere long thy blood, which is now warm, will freeze in thy veins; thy spring crowned with *May* buds, will tread on *December's* heel; thy marrow dry in thy bones, thy sinews shrink, thy legs  
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bow under the weight of thy body, thy eye-strings crack, thy tongue not able to call for help; yea, thy heart with thy flesh shall fail; and now thou, who art such a giant, take a turn if thou canst in thy chamber, yea, raise but thy head from thy pillow if thou art able, or call back thy breath, which is making haste to be gone out of thy nostrils, never to return more; and darest thou glory in that which so soon may be prostrate?

Is it wisdom? The same grave that covers thy body shall bury all that, (the wisdom of thy flesh I mean) all thy thoughts and goodly plots shall come to nothing. Indeed, if a Christian, thy thoughts shall ascend with thee; not one holy breathing of thy soul shall be lost. Is it thy blood and birth? Whoever thou art, thou art base born till born again, the same blood runs in thy veins with the beggar in the street, Acts xvii. 26. All nations there, we find made of the same blood: They come in and go out of the world alike: One is not made of finer earth, nor resolved into purer dust than another.

*Use 2.* Is man flesh? Trust not in man; *cursed be he that maketh flesh his arm.* Not the mighty man; robes may hide and garnish, but cannot change the flesh, Psal. cxlvi. *Put not your trust in Princes;* alas, they cannot keep their crown on their own heads, or their heads on their own shoulders; and lookest thou for that which they cannot give themselves? Not in wise men, whose designs often recoil upon themselves, that they cannot perform their enterprise. Man's carnal wisdom intends one thing, but God turns the wheel, and brings forth another.

Trust not in holy men, they have flesh, and their judgment is fallible, yea, their way sometimes doubtful. His mistake may lead thee aside, and though he returns, thou mayest go on and perish. Trust not in any man, in all men, no not in thyself, thou art flesh. He is a fool (saith the wise man) that trusts his heart. Not in the best thou art, or dost, the garment of thy righteousness is spotted with the flesh; all is counted with Saint Paul, confidence in the flesh, besides our rejoicing in Christ, Phil. iii. 3.

*Use 3.* Fear not man, he is but flesh. This was David's resolve, Psal. lvi. 4. *I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.* What, not such a great man, not such a number of men,

men, who have the keys of all the prisons at their girdle; who can kill or save alive? No, not these, only look they are thy enemies for righteousness sake. Take heed thou makest not the least child thine enemy, by offering wrong to him, God will right the wicked even upon the Saint. If he offend, he shall find no shelter under God's wing for his sin. This made Jerome complain, that the Christian's sin made the arms of those barbarous nations which invaded Christendom victorious. But if man's wrath find thee in God's way, and his fury take fire at thy holiness, thou needest not fear though thy life be the prey he hunts for. Flesh can only wound flesh, he may kill thee, but not hurt thee. Why shouldst thou fear to be stript of that which thou hast resigned already to Christ? 'Tis the first lesson thou learnest, if a Christian, to deny thyself, take up thy cross, and follow thy master, so that the enemy comes too late; thou hast no life to lose, because thou hast given it already to Christ, nor can man take away that without God's leave; all thou hast is ensured; and though God hath not promised thee immunity from suffering in this kind, yet he hath undertaken to bear the loss, yea, to pay thee an hundred-fold, and thou shalt not stay for it till another world.

Again thou oughtest not to fear flesh. Our Saviour, Matth. 10. thrice in the compass of six verses, commands us not to fear man; if thy heart quails at him, how wilt thou behave thyself in the list against Satan, whose little finger is heavier than a man's loins? The Romans had *arma prælusoria*, weapons rebated, or cudgels, which they were tried at before they came to the sharp. If thou canst not bear a bruise in thy flesh from man's cudgels and blunt weapon, what wilt thou do when thou shalt have Satan's sword in thy side? God counts himself reproached when his children fear a sorry man; therefore we are bid, to sanctify the Lord, and not to fear their fear. Now if thou wouldest not fear man who is but flesh, labour,

First, To mortify thy own flesh; flesh only fears flesh: when the soul degenerates into carnal desires and delights, no wonder he falls into carnal fears. Have a care, Christian, thou bringest not thyself into bondage: perhaps thy heart feeds on the applause of man, this will make thee afraid to be evil spoken of, as those who shuffled with Christ,



xii. 42. owning him in private, when they durst not confess him openly, for they loved the praise of men. David saith, The mouth of the wicked is an open sepulchre; and in this grave hath many a Saint's name been buried. But if this fleshly desire were mortified, thou wouldest not pass to be judged by man, and so of all carnal affections. Some meat you observe is aguish; if thou settest thy heart on any thing that is carnal, wife, child, or estate, &c. these will incline thee to a base fear of man, who may be God's messenger to afflict thee in these.

Secondly, Set flesh against flesh. Faith fixeth the heart, and a fixed heart is not readily afraid. Physicians tell us, we are never so subject to receive infection as when the spirits are low, and therefore the antidotes they give are all cordials. When the spirits are low through unbelief, every threatening from man makes a sad impression. Let thy faith but take a deep draught of the promises, and thy courage will rise.

Fourthly, Comfort thyself, Christian, with this, that as thou art flesh, so thy heavenly Father knows it, and considers thee for it.

First, In point of affliction, Psal. ciii. 14. *He knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are but dust.* Not like some unskilful empiric, who hath but one receipt for all, strong or weak, young or old, but as a wise physician considers his patient, and then writes his prescription: Men and Devils are but God's apothecaries, they make not our physic, but give what God prescribes.

Balaam loved Balak's fee well enough, but could not go an hair's breadth beyond God's commission. Indeed God is not so choice of the wicked, Isa. xxvii. 7. *Hath he smitten him as he smote those that smote him?* In a Saint's cup the poison of the affliction is corrected; not so in the wicked's; and therefore what is medicine to the one, is ruin to the other.

Secondly, In duty; he knows you are but flesh, and therefore pities and accepts thy weak service, yea, he makes apologies for thee; the spirit is willing, saith Christ, but the flesh is weak.

Thirdly, In temptations he considers thou art flesh, and proportions the temptation to so weak a nature: such tempta-  
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tation as is common to man, a moderate temptation (as in the margin) fitted for so frail a creature. Whenever the Christian begins to faint under the weight of it, God makes as much haste to his succour, as a tender mother would to her swooning child; therefore he is said to be nigh to revive such, lest their spirit should fail.

### SECT. III.

The second thing follows—the conjuncture of the Saint's enemies: we have not to do with naked man, but with man led on by Satan; not with flesh and blood, but principles and powers acting in them. There are two sorts of men the Christian wrestles with, good men and bad; Satan strikes in with both.

First, The Christian wrestles with good men. Many a sharp conflict there hath been between Saint and Saint, scuffling in the dark through misunderstanding of the truth, and each other: Abraham and Lot at strife. Aaron and Miriam jostled with Moses for the wall, till God interposed and ended the quarrel by his immediate stroke on Miriam. The Apostles, even in the presence of their master, were at high words, contending who should be greatest. Now in these civil wars among Saints, Satan is a great kindle-coal, though little seen, because like Ahab he fights in a disguise, playing first on one side, and then on the other, aggravating every petty injury, and thereupon provoking to wrath and revenge; therefore the Apostle cautions against anger, and useth this argument, *give no place to the Devil*, as if he had said, fall not out among yourselves, except you long for the Devil's company, who is the true soldier of fortune (as the common phrase is) living by his sword, and therefore hastes thither where there is any hopes of war. Gregory compares the Saints in their sad differences to two cocks, which Satan the master of the pit sets on fighting, in hope, when killed, to sup with them at night. Solomon saith. Prov. xviii. 6. *The mouth of the contentious man calleth for strokes.* Indeed we by our mutual strifes give the Devil a staff to beat us  
with

with; he cannot well work without fire, and therefore blows up those coals of contention which he useth as a forge, to heat our spirits into wrath, and then we are malleable, easily hammered as he pleases. Contention puts the soul into disorder, and *inter arma silent leges*. The law of grace acts not freely, when the spirit is in a commotion; meek Moses provoked, speaks unadvisedly. Methinks this (if nothing else will) should sound a retreat to our unhappy differences, that this Joab hath a hand in them; he sets this evil spirit between brethren, and what folly is it to bite and devour one another, to make hell sport? We are prone to mistake our heat for zeal, whereas commonly in strifes between Saints, it is a fireship sent in by Satan to break their unity and order; wherein while they stand they are an armada invincible: and Satan knows he hath no other way but this to scatter them: when the Christian's language, which should be one, begins to be confounded, they are then near scattering; 'tis time for God to part his children, when they cannot live in peace together.

Secondly, The Christian wrestles with wicked men. Because you are not of the world, saith Christ, the world hates you. The Saint's nature and life are antipodes to the world? fire and water, Heaven and Hell, may as soon be reconciled, as they with it. The heretic is his enemy for truth's sake; the profane for holiness; to both the Christian is an abomination, as the Israelite to the Egyptian; hence come wars, the fire of persecution never goes out in the hearts of the wicked, who say in their hearts as they once with their lips, *Christiani ad leones*. Now in all the Saint's wars with the wicked, Satan is commander in chief, 'tis their father's works they do, his lusts they fulfil. The Sabeans plundered Job, but went on Satan's errand. The heretic broacheth corrupt doctrine, perverts the faith of many, but in that he is the minister of Satan, 2 Cor. xi. 15. They have their call, their wiles and wages from him. Persecutors, their work is ascribed to Hell; is it a persecution of the tongue? 'Tis Hell sets it on fire: Is it of the hand? Still they are but the Devil's instruments, Rev. ii. 10. *The Devil shall cast some of you into prison.*

Use 1. Do you see any driving furiously against the truths or servants of Christ; O pity them as the most miserable

wretches in the world, fear not their power, admire not their parts; they are men possessed of and acted by the Devil, they are his drudges and his slaughter-slaves, as a martyr called them. Augustine in his epistle to Lycinius, one of excellent parts, but wicked, who once was his scholar speaking thus pathetically to him: "O how I could weep and mourn over thee, to see such a sparkling wit prostituted to the Devil's service! if thou hadst found a golden chalice, thou wouldst have given it to the church; but God hath given thee a golden head, parts and wit, and in this *prophinas teipsum Diabolo*, thou drinkest thyself to the Devil." When you see men of power and parts, using them against God that gave them, weep over them; better they had lived and died, the one, slaves, the other, fools, than do the Devil such service with them.

*Use 2.* O ye Saints, when reproached and persecuted, look further than man, spend not your wrath upon him; alas they are but instruments in the Devil's hand: save your displeasure for Satan, who is thy chief enemy: these may be won to Christ's side and so become thy friends at last. Now and then we see some running from the Devil's colours, and washing the wound with their tears, which they have made by their cruelty. 'Tis a notable passage in Anselm, who compares the heretic and persecutor to the horse, and the Devil to the rider. Now, saith he, in battle, when the enemy comes riding up, the valiant soldier, *Non irascitur equo, sed equiti, & quantum potest agit ut equitam percutiat, equum possideat; sic contra malos homines agendum, non contra illos, sed illum qui illos instigat, ut dum Diabolus vincitur, infelices quos ille possidet liberentur*: he is angry, not with the horse, but horse-man; he labours to kill the man, that he may possess the horse for his use: thus we do with the wicked, we are not to bend our wrath against them, but Satan that rides them, and spurs them on, labouring by prayer for them as Christ did on the cross, to dismount the Devil, that so these miserable souls hackneyed by him may be delivered from him.

'Tis more honour to take one soul alive out of the Devil's clutches, than to leave many slain upon the field. Erasmus saith of Augustine, that he begged the lives of those heretics at the hands of the Emperor's officers, who had been  
bloody

bloody persecutors of the orthodox: *Cupiebat*, saith he, *amicus medicus superesse, quos arte sua sanaret*: like a kind physician he desired their life, that if possible he might work a cure on them, and make them sound in the faith.

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## CHAP. II.

*Wherein is shewn what a Principality Satan hath, how he came to be such a Prince, and how we may know whether we be under him as our Prince, or not.*

### VERSE 12.

*But against Principalities and Powers, &c.*

### SECT. I.

THE Apostle having shewn what the Saints enemies are not, *flesh and blood*, frail men, who cannot come but they are seen; who may be resisted with man's power, or escape by flight: now he describes them positively, *against Principalities and Powers, &c.* Some think the Apostle by these diverse names and titles, intends to set forth the distinct orders, whereby the Devils are subordinate one to another, so they make the Devil, ver. 11. to be the head or monarch, and these, ver. 12. so many inferior orders, as among men there are Princes, Dukes, Earls, &c. under an Emperor. That there is an order among the Devils cannot be denied. The scripture speaks of a Prince of the Devils, Matth. ix. and

of the Devil and his Angels, who with him fell from their first station, called his angels as it is probably conceived, because one above the rest, (as the head of the faction) drew with him multitudes of others into his party, who with him sinned and fell. But that there should be so many distinct orders among them, as there are several branches in this description, is not probable; too weak a notion to be the foundation of a pulpit discourse, therefore we shall take them as meant of the Devils collectively. We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with Devils, who are principalities, powers, &c. and not distributively, to make principalities one rank, powers another; for some of these branches cannot be meant of distinct orders, but promiscuously of all as spiritual wickedness; it being not proper to one to be spirits or wicked, but common to all.

First, Then the Devil, or whole pack of them, are here described by their government in this world, *Principalities*.

Secondly, By their strength, called *Powers*.

Thirdly, By their nature in their substance and degeneracy, *Spiritual wickedness*.

Fourthly, In their kingdom or proper territories, *Rulers of the darkness of this world*.

Fifthly, By the ground of the war, *In heavenly places, or about heavenly things*.

First, *Principalities*; the abstract for the concrete, that is, such as have a principality; so Titus iii. 1. We are bid to be subject to *Principalities and Powers*, that is, Princes and Rulers, so the vulgar reads it. We wrestle against Princes; which some will have to express the eminency of their nature above man's, that as the state and spirit of Princes is more raised than others, great men have great spirits, as Zeba and Zalmunna to Gideon, asking who they were they slew at Tabor; as thou art, say they, so were they, each one resembled the children of a King, that is, for majesty and presence becoming a princely race: So they think, the eminent nature of Angels here to be intended, who are so far above the highest Prince, as he above the basest peasant; but because they are described by their nature in this fourth branch, I shall subscribe to their judgment, who take this for their principality of government, which the Devil exerciseth in this lower world.

*Doct.*

*Doct.* That Satan is a great Prince; Christ himself stiles him the Prince of the world, John xiv. Princes have their thrones where they sit in state; Satan hath his, Rev. ii. 13. *Thou dwellest where Satan hath his throne*; and that such an one as no earthly Prince may compare: few Kings are enthroned in the hearts of their subjects; they rule their bodies, and command their purses, but how often in a day are they pulled out of their thrones by their discontented subjects! but Satan hath the hearts of all his subjects.— Princes have their homage and peculiar honour done to them; Satan is served upon the knee of his subjects, the wicked is said to *worship the Devil*, Rev. xiii. 4. No Prince expects such worship as he; no less than religious worship will serve him, 2 Chron. xi. 15. Jeroboam there is said to ordain Priests for Devils, and therefore he is called not only the Prince, but the God of this world, because he hath the worship of a God given him. Princes, such as are absolute, have a legislative power, nay, their own will is their law, as at this day in Turkey, where their laws are writ in no other tables, than in the proud Sultan's breast; thus Satan gives law to the poor sinner, who is bound, and must obey, though the law, be writ with his own blood, and the creature hath nothing but damnation for fulfilling the Devil's lust; 'tis called *a law of sin*, Rom. viii. 2. because it comes with authority; Princes have their Ministers of State, whom they employ for the safety and enlargement of their territories: So Satan his, 2 Cor. xi. 15. who propagate his cursed designs; therefore we read of doctrine of Devils: Princes have their *Arcana imperii*, which none know but a few favourites in whom they confide: thus the Devil hath his mysteries of iniquity, and depths of Satan we read of, which all his subjects know not of, Rev. ii. 24. These are imparted to a few favourites, such as Elymas, whom Paul calls full of all subtilty, and child of the Devil; such, whose consciences are so debauched, that they scruple not the most horrid sins; these are his white boys: I have read of a people in America, that love meat best when it is rotten and stinks. So the more corrupt and rotten the creature is in sin, the better he pleaseth his tooth: some are more the children of the Devil than others. Christ hath his beloved Disciple; and Satan those that lay in his very bosom, and know what is in his heart. In a word,

Princes have their *Victigalia*, their tribute and custom: so Satan his. Indeed he doth not so much share with the sinner in all, but is the owner of all he hath, so that the Devil is the merchant, and the sinner the broker to trade for him, who at last puts all his gains into the Devil's purse: time, strength, parts, yea, conscience and all are spent to keep him in his throne.

## SECT. II.

*Quest. But how comes Satan to his principalities?*

*Ans.* Not lawfully, though he can shew a fair claim. As, First, He obtained it by conquest; as he won his crown, so he wears it by power and policy. But conquest is a cracked title. A thief is not the honestest, because able to force the traveller to deliver his purse; and a thief on the throne is no better than a private one on the road, or pirate in a pinnance, as one boldly told Alexander. Neither doth that prove good with process of time, which was evil at first. Satan indeed hath kept possession long, but a thief will be so, as long as he keeps his stolen goods; he stole the heart of Adam from God at first, and doth no better to this day. Christ's conquest is good, because the ground of the war is righteous, to recover what was his own, but Satan cannot say of the meanest creature, *'Tis my own.*

Secondly, Satan may lay claim to his principality by election; 'tis true, he came in by a wile, but now he is a Prince elect, by the unanimous choice of corrupt nature; ye are of your Father the Devil, saith Christ, and his lusts ye will do. But this also hath a flaw in it; for man by law of creation is God's subject, and cannot give away God's right; by sin he loseth his right in God, as a protector, but God loseth not his right as a sovereign. Sin disabled man to keep God's laws, but it doth not enfranchise or disoblige him that he need not keep it.

Thirdly, Satan may claim a deed of gift from God himself, as he was bold to do to Christ upon this ground, persuading him to worship him as the Prince of the world, Luke iv. 5, 6. *He shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world, saying, All this will I give thee, for that is delivered*  
unto



*unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it.* Where there was a truth, though he spake more than the truth (as he cannot speak truth, but to gain credit to some lie at the end of it) God indeed hath delivered in a sense this world to him, but not in his sense, to do what he will with it, nor by any approbatory act given him a patent to vouch him his viceroy; not Satan by the grace of God, but by the permission of God, Prince of the World.

*Quest. But why doth God permit this apostate Creature to exercise such a principality over the world?*

*Ans.* First, As a righteous Act of vengeance on man, for revolting from the sweet government of his rightful Lord and Maker; 'tis the way God punisheth rebellion: Because ye would not serve me with gladness, in the abundance of all things, therefore ye shall serve your enemies in hunger, &c. Satan is a king given in God's wrath. Shem's curse is man's punishment, a servant of servants. The Devil is God's slave, man the Devil's. Sin hath set the Devil on the creatures back, and now he hurries him without mercy (as he did the swine) till he be choak'd with flames, if mercy interpose not.

Secondly, God permits this his principality, in order to the glorifying of his name in the recovery of his elect from the power of this great potentate. What a glorious name will God have when he hath finished this war, wherein at first he found all possessed by this enemy, and not a man of all the sons of Adam to offer himself as a volunteer in this service till made willing in the day of his power; this will gain God a name above every name, not only of creatures, but of those by which himself was known to his creature. The workmanship of heaven and earth give him the name of a Creator, Providence or Preserver; but this of Saviour, wherein he doth both the former, preserve his creature, which else had been lost, and create a new creature, I mean the Babe of Grace, which, through God, shall be able to beat the Devil out of the field, who was able to drive Adam, though created in his full stature, out of Paradise; and may not all the other works of God empty themselves as the rivers into the sea, losing their names, or rather swelling into one of redemption? Had not Satan taken God's elect prisoners, they would not have gone to Heaven with such acclamations of triumph.

There

There are three expressions of a great joy in scripture, the joy of a woman after her travail, the joy of harvest, and the joy of him that divideth the spoil; the exultation of all these is wrought upon a sad ground; many a pain and tear it costs the travailing woman, many a fear the husbandman, perils and wounds the soldier, before they come at their joy, but at last are paid for all, the remembrance of their past sorrows feeding their present joys. Had Christ come and entered into affinity with our nature, and returned peaceably to Heaven with his spouse, finding no resistance: though this would have been admirable love, and that would have afforded true joy of marriage, yet this way of carrying his Saints to Heaven will heighten the joy, as it adds to the nuptial song, the triumph of a conqueror, who hath rescued his bride out of the hands of Satan, as he was leading her to the chambers of Hell.

### SECT. III.

*Use 1.* Is Satan such a Prince? try whose subject thou art. His empire is large, only a few privileged, who are translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; even in Christ's own territories, (visible church I mean) where his name is professed, and the sceptre of his gospel held forth, there Satan hath his subjects. As Christ had his Saints in Nero's court; so the Devil his servants in the outward court of his visible church. Thou must therefore have something more to exempt thee from this government, than living within the pale, and giving an outward conformity to the ordinances of Christ; Satan will yield to this, and be no loser: as a King lets his merchants trade to, yea, live in a foreign kingdom, and while they are there learn the language, and observe the customs of the place; this breaks not their allegiance: nor all that they loyalty to Satan. When a statute was made in Queen Elizabeth's Reign, that all should come to church, the Papists sent to Rome to know the Pope's pleasure; he returned them this answer, (as it is said) Bid the Catholics in *England* give me their heart, and let the Queen take the rest. His subject thou art whom thou crownest in thy heart, and not whom thou flatterest with thy lips.

But

But to bring the trial to an issue, know thou belondest to one of these, and but to one, Christ and Satan divide the whole world; Christ will bear no equal, and Satan no superior, and therefore hold in with both you cannot. Now if thou say Christ be thy Prince, answer these interrogations.

First, How came he into the throne? Satan had once the quiet possession of thy heart: thou wast by birth as the rest of thy neighbours, Satan's vassal, yea, hast often vouched him in the course of thy life to be thy Lord; how then comes this great change? Satan surely would not of his own accord resign his crown and sceptre to Christ; and as for thyself thou wert neither willing to renounce, nor able to resign his power: this then must only be the fruit of Christ's victorious arms, whom *God hath exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour*, Acts v. 31. Speak therefore, hath Christ come to thee as once Abraham to Lot, when prisoners to Chedorlaomer, rescuing thee out of Satan's hands, as he was leading thee in chains of lusts to hell. Didst thou ever hear a voice from Heaven in the ministry of the word calling out to thee, as once to Saul, so as to lay thee at God's foot, and make thee face about for heaven, to strike thee blind in thine own apprehension, who before had a good opinion of thy state, to tame and weaken thee; so as now thou art willing to be led by the hand of a child after Christ? Did ever Christ come to thee, as the Angel to Peter in prison, rousing thee up, and not only causing the chains of darkness and stupidity to fall off thy mind and conscience, but make thee obedient also, that the iron grate of thy will hath opened to Christ; before he left thee? then thou hast something to say for thy freedom. But if in all this I be a barbarian, and the language I speak be strange, thou knowest no such work to have passed upon thy spirit, then thou art yet in thy old prison: Can there be a change of government in a nation by a conqueror that invades it, and his subjects not hear of this? one king dethroned, and another crowned in thy soul, and thou hear no scuffle all this while? The regenerating Spirit is compared to the wind, John iii. 8. his first attempts on the soul may be so secret, that the creature knows not whence they come, or whither they tend; but before he hath done, the sound will be heard throughout the soul, so as it cannot but see a great change in itself, and say, I that was blind, now see; I that was as hard as ice, now relenting

relenting for sin; now my heart gives, I can melt and mourn for it. I that was well enough without a Christ, yea, did wonder what others saw in him, to make so much ado for him, now have changed my note with the daughters of Jerusalem; (as I scornfully have asked) I have learned to ask them where he is, that I might seek him with them. O soul! canst thou say 'tis thus with thee? thou may know who has been here, no less than Christ; who, by his victorious Spirit, hath translated thee from Satan's power into his own sweet kingdom.

Secondly, Whose law dost thou freely subject thyself unto? the laws of these princes are as contrary as their natures; the one a law of sin, Rom. viii. 2. the other a law of holiness, Rom. vii. 12. and therefore if sin hath not so far bereaved thee of thy wits, as not to know sin from holiness, thou mayest (except resolved to cheat thy own soul) soon be resolved; confess therefore, and give glory to God. To which of these laws doth thy soul set its seal? When Satan sends out his proclamation, and bids sinner go, set thy foot upon such a command of God, observe what is thy behaviour, dost thou yield thyself, as Paul phraseth it, Rom. vi. 16. a metaphor from Princes' servants, or others, who are said to present themselves before their Lord, as ready and at hand to do their pleasure; by which the Apostle elegantly describes the forwardness of the sinner's heart to come to Satan's foot, when he knocks or calls: now doth thy soul go out to meet thy lust, (as Aaron his brother) glad to see its face in an occasion? Thou art not brought over to sin with much ado, but thou likest the command; *Transgress at Gilgal*, (saith God) *this liketh you well*, Amos. iv. 5. As a Courtier, who doth not only obey, but thank his Prince that he will employ him. Needest thou be long in resolving whose thou art? Did ever any question, whether those were Jeroboam's subjects who willingly followed his command? Hos. v. 11. Alas for thee, thou art under the power of Satan, tied by a chain stronger than brass or iron: Thou lovest thy lust. A Saint may be for a time under a force, sold under sin, as the Apostle bemoans, and therefore glad when deliverance comes, but thou sellest thyself to work iniquity. If Christ should come to take thee from thy lust, thou wouldst whine after them, as Micah after his gods.

Thirdly

Thirdly, To whom goest thou for protection? As it belongs to the Prince to protect his subjects, so Princes expect their subjects should trust them with their safety; the very bramble says, Judg. ix. 15. *If in truth ye anoint me King, then put your trust under my shadow.* Now who hath thy confidence? Darest thou trust God with thy soul, and the affairs of it in well doing? Good subjects follow their calling, commit state matters to the wisdom of their Prince and his council; when wronged, they appeal to their Prince in his laws for right; and when they do offend their Prince, they submit to the penalty of the law; and bear his displeasure patiently, till humbling themselves they recover his favour, and do not in discontent fall to open rebellion. Thus a gracious soul follows his Christian calling, committing himself to God as a faithful Creator, to be ordered by his wise providence. If he meets with violence from any, he scorns to beg aid of the Devil to help him, or be his own judge to right himself: no, he acquiesces in the counsel and comfort the word of God gives him. If himself offends, and so comes under the lash of God's correcting hand, he doth not then take up rebellious arms against God, and refuse to receive correction, but saith, Why should a living man complain? A man for the punishment of his sin; whereas a naughty heart dares not venture his estate, life, credit, or any thing he hath with God in well-doing, he thinks he shall be undone presently, if he sits still under the shadow of God's promise for protection; and therefore he runs from God as from under an old house that would fall on his head, and lays the weight of his confidence in wicked policy, making lies his refuge; like Israel, he trusts in perverseness. When God tells him, in returning and rest he shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be his strength; he hath not faith to take God's word for his security in ways of obedience. And when God comes to afflict him for any disloyal carriage, instead of accepting the punishment for his sin, and so to own him for his sovereign Lord, that may righteously punish the faults of his disobedient subjects, his heart is filled with rage against God, and instead of waiting quietly and humbly (like a good subject) till God upon his repentance receives him into his favour, his wretched heart (presenting God as an enemy to him) will not suffer any such gracious or amicable thought of God to dwell in his bosom, but bids him look for no good at his hand.

This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait on the Lord any longer? Whereas a gracious heart is most encouraged to wait from this very consideration that drives the other away; because 'tis the Lord afflicts, Micah vii. 6.

Fourthly, Whom dost thou sympathize with? He is thy Prince, whose victories and losses thou layest to heart, whether in thy own bosom, or abroad in the world. What saith thy soul, when God hedgeth up thy way, and keeps thee from that sin which Satan hath been soliciting for? If on Christ's side, thou wilt rejoice when thou art delivered out of a temptation, though it be by falling into an affliction; as David said of Abigail, so wilt thou here, blessed be the ordinance, blessed be the providence, which kept me from sinning against my God; but if otherwise, thou wilt harbour a secret grudge against the word which stood in the way, and be discontented thy design took not. A naughty heart, (like Amnon) pines while his lust hath vent. Again, what music do the achievements of Christ in the world make in thine ear? When thou hearest the gospel thrives, the blind see, the lame walk, the poor gospelized, doth thy spirit rejoice in that hour? If a Saint, thou wilt, as God is thy Father, rejoice thou hast more brethren born, as he is thy Prince, that the multitude of his subjects increase: so when thou seest the plots of Christ's enemies discovered, powers defeated, canst thou go forth with the Saints to meet King Jesus, and ring him out of the field with praises? Or do thy bells ring backward, and such news make thee haste, like Haman, mourning to thine house, there to empty thy spirit, swoln with rancour against his Saints and truth? Or thy policy can master thy passion so far, as to make fair weather in thy countenance, and suffer thee to join with the people of God in their acclamations of joy, yet then art thou a close mourner within, and likest the work no better than Haman did his office, in holding Mordecai's stirrup, who had rather have held the ladder: this speaks thee a certain enemy to Christ, how handsomely soever thou mayest carry it before men.

Secondly, Bless God, O ye Saints, who upon the former trial can say, you are translated into the kingdom of Christ, and so delivered from the tyranny of this usurper: there are few but have some one gaudy day in a year, which they solemnize

lemnize, some keep their birth-day ; others their marriage; some their emancipation from a cruel service ; others their deliverance from some eminent danger : here is a mercy where all these meet. You may call it as Adam did his wife, *Chevah*, the mother of all living ; every mercy riseth up and calls this blessed ; this is thy birth-day, thou didst but begin to live when Christ began to live in thee. The father of the prodigal dated his son's life from his return, *This my son was dead and is alive*. It is thy marriage day, *I have married you to one husband even Jesus Christ* saith Paul to the Corinthians. Perhaps thou hast thus enjoyed thy husband's sweet company many a day, and had a numerous offspring of joys and comforts by thy fellowship with him, the thoughts of which cannot but endear him to thee, and make the day of thy espousals delightful to thy memory : It is thy emancipation, then were the indentures cancelled, wherein thou wert bound to sin and Satan: when the Son made thee free thou becamest free, indeed : Thou canst not say thou wast born free, for thy father was a slave, nor that thou hast bought thy freedom with a sum, by *grace ye are saved*. Heaven is settled on thee in the promise, and thou not charged, so much as for the writings drawing. All is done at Christ's cost with whom God indented, and to whom he gave the promise of eternal life before the world began, as a free estate to settle upon every believing soul in the day they shall come to Christ, and receive him for their Prince and Saviour; so that from the hour thou didst come under Christ's shadow, all the sweet fruit that grows on this tree of life is thine ; with Christ, all that both worlds have falls to thee ; all is yours, because you are Christ's. O Christian, look upon thyself now, and bless thy God to see what a change there is made in thy state, since that black and dismal time, when thou wast a slave to the Prince of darkness ; how couldst thou like thy old scullion's work again ; Or think of returning to thy house of bondage: Now thou knowest the privileges of Christ's kingdom. Great Princes, who from baseness and beggary have ascended to kingdoms and empires (to add to the joy of their present honour) have delighted to speak often of their base birth, to go and see the mean cottages where they were first entertained, and had their birth and breeding, and the like. And 'tis useful for the Christian to look in at the grate, to see the smoky hole where once he lay, to view

the chains wherewith he was laden, and so to compare Christ's court and the Devil's prison; the felicity of the one, and the horror of the other. But when we do our best to affect our hearts with this mercy, by all the enhancing aggravations we can find out; alas! how little a portion of it shall we know here? This is a *nimum excellens*, which cannot be fully seen, unless it be by a glorified eye; how can it be fully known by us, where it cannot be fully enjoyed? Thou art translated into the kingdom of Christ, but thou art a great way from his court. That is kept in Heaven, which the Christian knows, as we do countries which we never saw, except by map; or some rarities that are sent us as a taste of what grows there in abundance.

Thirdly, This (Christian) calls for thy loyalty and faithful service to Christ, who hath saved thee from Satan's bondage. Say, O ye Saints, to Christ, as they to Gideon, Come thou and rule over us, for thou hast delivered us from the hand, not of Midian, but of Satan. Who so able to defend thee from his wrath as he who broke his power? Who like to rule thee so tenderly, as he that could not brook another's tyranny over thee? In a word, who hath right to thee besides him, who ventured his life to redeem thee? *That being delivered from thine enemies, thou mayest serve him without fear in holiness all the days of thy life.* And were it not a pity that Christ should take all these pains to lift up thy head from Satan's house of bondage, and give thee a place among those in his own house, who are admitted to minister unto him, (which is the highest honour the nature of men or angels is capable of) and that thou shouldst after all this be found to have a hand in any treasonable practice against thy dear Saviour? Surely Christ may think he hath deserved better at your hands, if at none besides. Where shall a Prince safely dwell, if not in the midst of his own courtiers; and those such as were all taken from chains and prisons to be thus preferred, the more to bend them to his service? Let Devils and devilish men do their own work, but let not thy hand (O Christian) be upon thy dear Saviour. But this is too little to bid thee not play the traitor. If thou hast any loyal blood running in thy veins, thy own heart will smite thee when thou rendest the least skirt of his holy law; thou canst as well carry burning coals in thy bosom, as hide any trea-



son there against thy dear Sovereign. No, 'tis some noble enterprize I would have thee think upon, how thou mayest advance the name of Christ higher in thy heart, and world too, as much as in thee lies. O how kindly did God take it, that David, (when peaceably set on his throne) was casting about, not how he might entertain himself with those pleasures which usually corrupt and debauch the court of Princes in the times of peace, but how he might shew zeal for God, in building a house for his worship, that had reared a throne for him, 2 Sam. vii. And is there nothing, Christian, thou canst think on, wherein thou mayest eminently be instrumental for God in thy generation? He is not a good subject that is all for what he can get of his Prince, but never thinks what service he may do for him. Nor he the true Christian, whose thoughts dwell more on his own happiness than the honour of his God. If subjects might chuse what life stands best for their own enjoyment, all would desire to live at court with their Prince; but because the Princes honour is more to be valued than this; therefore noble spirits (to do their Prince service) can deny themselves the delicacies of a court, to hazard their lives in the field, and thank their Prince too for the honour of their employment. Blessed Paul, upon these terms, was willing to have his day of coronation in glory prorogued, and stay as a companion with his brethren in tribulation here, for the furtherance of the gospel. This indeed makes it *operæ pretium vivere*, worth the while to live, we have by it a fair opportunity (if hearts to husband it) in which we may give a proof of our real gratitude to our God for his redeeming love in rescuing us out of the power of the Prince of darkness, and translating us into the kingdom of his dear son. And therefore, Christian, lose no time, but what thou meanest to do for God, do it quickly. Art thou a Magistrate? it will be soon seen on whose side thou art: If indeed thou hast renounced allegiance to Satan, and taken Christ for thy Prince, declare thyself an enemy to all that bear the name of Satan, and march under his colours. Study well thy commission, and when thou understandest the duty of thy place, fall to work zealously for God. Thou hast thy Prince's sword put into thy hand, be sure thou use it; and take heed how thou use it; that when called to deliver it up, and thy account also, it may not

not be found rusty in the sheath through sloth and cowardice, besmeared with the blood of violence, nor bent and gapt with partiality and injustice. Art thou a Minister of the Gospel? Thy employment is high, an *Ambassador*, and that not from some petty Prince, but the great God to his rebellious subjects; a calling so honourable, that the Son of God disdained not to come from Heaven to perform it, called therefore the Messenger the of Covenant; yea, he had stayed to this day on earth in person about it, had he not been called to reside as our Ambassador and Advocate in Heaven with the Father: and therefore in his bodily absence he hath intrusted thee and a few more to carry on their treaty with sinners, which when on earth himself began. And what can you do more acceptable to him, than to be faithful in it, as a business on which he hath set his heart so much? If ever you would see his sweet face with joy (you that are his *Ambassadors*) attend to your work, and labour to bring this treaty of peace to a blessed issue between God and those you are sent to. And then if sinners will not come off, and seal the articles of the gospel, you shall (as Abraham said to the servant) be clear of your oath. Though Israel be not gathered, yet ye shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord. And let not the private Christian say, he is may not bear the Magistrate's fruit or the Minister's. Though a dry tree, and can do nothing for Christ his Prince, because he thou hast not a commission to punish the sins of others with the sword of justice, yet thou mayest shew thy zeal in mortifying thy own with the sword of the spirit, and mourn for theirs also: though thou mayest not condemn them on the bench, yet thou mayest, yea, oughtest, by the power of a holy life, to convince and judge them; for such a judge *Lot* was to the *Sodomites*. Though thou art not sent to preach and baptize, yet thou mayest be wonderfully helpful to them who are. The Christian's prayers whet the magistrate's and minister's sword also. O pray, Christian, and pray again, that Christ's territories may be enlarged; never go to hear the word, but pray, thy kingdom come. Loving Princes take great content in the acclamations and good wishes of their subjects as they pass by; Long live the King, coming from a loyal breath, though poor, is worth  
more

more than a subsidy from those, who deny their hearts while they part with their money. Thou servest a Prince (Christian) who knows what all his subjects think of him, and he counts it his honour not to have a multitude feignedly submit to him, but to have a people that love him, and cordially like his government, who if they were to chuse their King, and make their own laws they should live under every day, would desire no other than himself, nor any other laws than what they have already from his mouth. It was no doubt great content to David that he had the hearts of his people so, that *whatever the King did, pleased them all*, 2 Sam. iii. 26. And surely God took it as well, that what he did pleased David; for indeed David was as content under the rule and disposal of God, as the people were under his; witness the calmness of his spirit in the greatest affliction that ever befel him, 2 Sam. xv. 26. *Behold, here am I, let him do to me as it seemeth good unto him.* Loyal soul! he had rather live in exile with the good will of God, than have his throne, if God will not say 'tis good for him.

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## CHAP. IV.

*Of the great power Satan hath, not only over the elementary and sensitive part of the world, but intellectual also, the souls of men.*

### SECT I.

THIS is the second branch of the description, wherein Satan is set forth by his might and power. This gives weight to the former; were he a Prince, and not able to raise a force that might appal the Saints; his name as a Prince  
were

were contemptible; but he hath power answerable to his dignity, which in five particulars will appear.

First, in his name; Secondly, his nature; Thirdly, his number; Fourthly, his order and unity; Lastly, the mighty works that are attributed to him.

For the first, He hath names of great power, called the strong man, Luke xi. 21. so strong, that he keeps his house in peace, in defiance of all the sons of Adam, none on earth being able to cope with this giant: Christ must come from Heaven to destroy him and his works, or the field is lost. He is called the roaring lion, which beast commands the whole forest; if he roars, all tremble; yea, in such a manner, as Pliny relates, that he goes among them, and they stand exanimated while he chuseth his prey without resistanc: such a lion is Satan, who leads sinners *captive at his will*, 2 Tim. iii. 26. *He takes them alive*, as the word is, as the fowler the bird, which with a little scrap is enticed into the net; or as the conqueror his cowardly enemy, who has no heart to fight, but yield without contest. Such cowards the Devil finds sinners; he no sooner appears in motion, but they yield: there are but a very few noble spirits, and those are the children of the most high God, who dare valiantly oppose him, and in striving against sin, resist to blood. He is called *the great red dragon*, who with his tail, wicked men his instruments, sweeps down the third part of the stars of Heaven. *The Prince of the power of the air*, because as a Prince can muster his subjects, and draw them into the field for his service, so the Devil can raise the *possee ali aerii*. In a word, he is called *the God of this world*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. because sinners give him a God-like worship, and fear him as the Saints do God himself.

Secondly, The Devil's nature shews his power; 'tis angelical. *Bless the Lord, ye his angels that excels in strength*, Psal. ciii. 20. Strength is put for angels, Psal. lxxviii. 25. *They did eat angels food*, Heb. the food of the mighty. In two things the power of angelical nature will appear, in its superiority, and in its spirituality.

First, Its superiority: angels are the top of the creation; man himself is made a little lower than the angels. Now in the works of creation, the superior hath a power over the inferior; the beasts over the grass and herb, man over the beasts, and angels over man.

Secondly,

Secondly, the spirituality of their nature. The weakness of man is from his flesh: his soul made for great enterprizes, but weighed down with a lump of flesh, is forced to row with a strength suitable to its weaker partner; but now the devils being angels, have no such incumbrance, no fumes from a fleshly part to cloud their understanding, which is clear and piercing; no clog at their heel to retard their motion, which for swiftness is set out by the wind and flame of fire. Yea, being spiritual they cannot be resisted with carnal force; fire and sword hurt them not. The angel which appeared to Manoah, went up in the fire that consumed the sacrifice, though such hath been the dotage, and is at this day of superstitious ones, that they think to charm the Devil with their carnal exorcisms; hence the Roman reliques, cross, holy water; yea, and among the Jews themselves in corrupter times, who thought by their phylacteries and circumcision, to scare away the devil, which made some of them expound that, Cant. iii. 8. of circumcision, *Every man hath his sword on his thigh, because of fear in the night*: By sword on the thigh, they expound circumcision, which they vainly esteem a charm against evil spirits that affright them in the night. But alas, the devil cares for none of these, no, not for an ordinance of God, when by fleshly confidence we make it a spell: he hath been often bound with these fetters and chains, (as it is said of him in the gospel) and the chains have been plucked asunder by him, neither could any man thus tame him. He esteems, as Job saith of the Leviathan, *iron as straw, brass as rotten wood*. It must be a stronger than the strong man must bind him, and none is stronger but God the father of spirits. The Devil lost indeed by his fall much of his power, in relation to that holy and happy state in which he was created, but not his natural abilities, he is an angel still, and hath an angel's power.

Thirdly, the number of Devils adds to their power. What lighter than the sand? yet number makes it weighty? What creature less than lice? yet what plague greater to the Egyptians? How formidable then must Devils be, who are both for nature so mighty, and such a multitude? there are Devils enough to besiege the whole earth; not a place under Heaven where Satan hath not his troops; not a person without

out some of these cursed spirits haunting and watching him wherever he goes ; yea, for some special service he can send a legion to keep garrison in one single person, as Mark v. and if so many can be spared to attend one, to what a number would the muster-roll of Satan's whole army amount if known? And now tell me, if we are not like to find our march difficult to Heaven, (if ever we mean to go thither) that are to pass through the very quarters of this multitude, who are scattered over the face of all the earth. When armies are disbanded, and the road full of debauched soldiers, wandering up and down, it is dangerous travelling: we hear then of murders and robberies from all quarters: These powers of hell are that party of angels, who for their mutiny and disobedience were cashiered Heaven, and thrust out of that glorious host, and ever since, they have straggled here below, endeavouring to do mischief to the children of men, especially to those travelling in Heaven's road.

Fourthly, their unity and order makes their number formidable. We cannot say there is love among them, that heavenly fire cannot live in the Devil's bosom, yet there is unity and order as to this, they are all agreed in their designs against God and man ; so their unity and consent knit together by the ligaments, not of love, but of hatred and policy ; hatred against God and his children, which tells them, that if they agree not in their design, their kingdom cannot stand. And how true they are to this wicked brother-hood, our Saviour gives a fair testimony, when he saith, *Satan fights not against Satan*. Did you ever hear of any mutiny in the Devil's army? or that any of those apostate angels did freely yield up one soul to Christ? There are many, and yet but one spirit of wickedness among them all. My name, said the devils, (not our name) *is legion*. The devil is called the Leviathan, (Isa. xxvii. 2. *The Lord with his strong sword shall punish Leviathan*) from their cleaving together, being of close compact, or joined together, a phrase used for the whale, Job iv. whose strength lies in his scales, which are so knit, that he is, as it were, covered with armour. Thus these cursed spirits do accord in their machinations, and labour to bring their instruments into the same league with them, not contented with their bare obedience, but where they can obtain it, require an express oath of their servants to be true to them, as in witches.

Fifthly, the mighty works that are attributed to these evil spirits in scripture declare their power, and these either respect the elementary, sensible, or intellectual part of the world. The elementary, what dreadful effects this Prince of the power of the air, is able to produce on that, see in the word; he cannot indeed make the least breath of air, drop of water, or spark of fire, but he can if let loose, (as Reverend Master *Caryl*, saith of Job i.) go to God's store-house, and make use of these in such a sort, as no man can stand before him; he can hurl the sea into such a commotion, that the depths shall boil like a pot, and disturb the air into storms and tempests, as if heaven and earth would meet. Job's children were buried in the ruins of their house by a puff of his mouth, yea, he can go to God's magazine, (as the former author saith) and let off the great ordnance of Heaven, causing such dreadful thunder and lightning, as shall not only affright, but do real execution, and that in a more dreadful way than in the ordinary course or nature. If man's art can so sublimate nature, as we see in the invention of powder, that hath such a strange force, much more able is he to draw forth its power. Again, over the sensitive world his power is great, not only the beasts, as in the herd of swine, hurried by him into the deep; but over the bodies of men also, as in Job, whose sore boils were not the breakings out of a distempered nature, but the print of Satan's fangs on his flesh, doing that suddenly, which in nature would have required more time to gather and ripen; and the demoniacs in the gospel grievously vexed and tormented by him. But this the Devil counts small game, his great spite is at the souls of men, which I call the intellectual world, his cruelty to the body is for the soul's sake. As Christ's pity to the bodies of men, (when on earth) healing their diseases, was in a subserviency to the good of their souls, bribing them with those mercies suitable to their carnal desires, that they might more willingly receive mercies for their souls, from that hand which was so kind to their bodies; as we give children something that pleaseth them, to persuade them to do something that pleaseth them not, go to school, learn their book: so the Devil who is cruel, as Christ is meek, and wisheth good (neither to body nor soul) yet shews his cruelty to the body,

but on a design against the soul, knowing well that the soul is soon discomposed by the perturbation of the other, the soul cannot but lightly hear, (and so have its peace and rest broken by the groans and complaints of the body) under whose very roof it dwells; and then it is not strange, if as for want of sleep the tongue talk idly, so the soul should break out into some sinful carriage, which is the bottom of the Devil's plot on a Saint. And as for other poor silly souls, he gains little less than a God-like fear and dread of them by that power he puts forth (through divine permission) in smiting their goods, beasts, and bodies, as among the Indians at this day. Yea, there are many among ourselves plainly shew what a throne Satan hath in their hearts upon this account, such who, as if there were not a God in Israel, go for help and cure to his doctors, wizards, &c. And truly had Satan no other way to work his will on the souls of men, but by this advantage he takes from the body, yet considering the degeneracy of man's state, how low his soul is sunk beneath its primitive extraction, how the body which was a lightsome house, is now become a prison to it, that which was its servant, is now become its master; it is no wonder he is able to do so much. But besides this, he hath as a spirit a nearer access to the soul, and as a superior spirit, yet more over man a lower creature. And above all, having got within the soul by man's fall, he hath now far more power than before; so that where he meets not resistance from God, he carries all before him: as in the wicked, whom he hath so at his devotion, that he is (in a sense) said to do that in them, which God doth in the Saints. God works effectually in them, Gal. ii. 1 Thes. ii. 13. Satan worketh effectually in the children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2. *energountos*, the same word with the former places, he is in a manner efficacious with them, as the holy spirit with the other. His delusions strong, 2 Thes. ii. 11. They returned not *re infecta*. The spirit *enlightens*, he *blinds* the minds of those that believe not, 2 Cor. iv. 4. The spirit *fills* the Saints, Ephes. v. 18. *Why hath Satan filled thy heart*, saith Peter to Ananias, Acts v. 3. *The spirit fills with knowledge, and the fruits of righteousness*; Satan fills with envy and all unrighteousness. The holy spirit fills with comfort; Satan the wicked with terrors; as in *Saul* vexed by an evil spirit; and Judas, into whom 'tis said he entered, and when he



he had satisfied his lust upon him, (as Ammon on Tamar) shuts the door of mercy upon him, and makes him that was even now traitor to his master, hangman to himself. And though Saints be not the proper subjects of his power, yet they are the chief objects of his wrath; his foot stands on the wicked's back, but he wrestles with these, and when God steps aside, he is far above their match: he hath sent the strongest among them home, trembling and crying to their God with the blood running about their consciences. He is mighty, both as a tempter to and for sin, knowing the state of the Christian's affairs so well, and being able to throw his fire balls so far into the inward senses (whether they be of lust or horror) and to blow up such unwearied solicitations, that if they at first meet not with some suitable dispositions in the Christian, at which (as from loose corners of powder) they may take fire, (which is most ordinary) yet in time he may bring over the creature by the length of the siege, and continued volley of such motions, to listen to a parley with them, if not yielding to them. Thus many times he even wearies out the soul with importunity.

## SECT. II.

*Use 1.* Let this O man, make the plumes of your pride fall, whoever thou art that gloriest in thy power; hast thou more than thou or any of the sons of Adam ever had, yet what is all that to the power of these angels? Is it the strength of thy body thou gloriest in? Alas, what is the strength of frail flesh, to the force of their spiritual nature? Thou art no more to these than a child to a giant, a worm to a man; who could tear up the mountains, and hurl the world into confusion, if God would but suffer them. Is it the strength of thy parts above others? Dost thou not see what fools he makes of the wisest among men? winding them about as a sophist would an idiot, make them believe light is dark, bitter is sweet, and sweet bitter; were not the strength of his parts admirable, could he make a rational creature as a man is, so absurdly throw away his scarlet and embrace dung: I mean, part with God and the glorious happiness he hath in him, in hope to mend himself,  
by

by embracing sin? yet this he did when man had his best wits about him in innocency. Is it the power and dignity got by warlike achievement? Grant thou were able to subdue nations, and give laws to the whole world, yet even then without grace from above thou wouldst be his slave. And he himself, for all this his power, a cursed spirit, the most miserable of all God's creatures, and the more, because he hath so much power to do mischief; had the Devil lost all his angelical abilities, when he fell, he had gained by his loss. Therefore tremble (O man) at any power thou hast, except thou use it for God. Art thou strong in body? Who hast thy strength? God, or thy lusts? Some are strong to drink, strong to sin, *thy hands shall therefore be stronger*, Isa. xxviii. 22. Hast thou power by thy place to do God and his Church service, but no heart to lay it out for them, but rather against them? thou and the Devil shall be tried at the same bar; it seems thou meanest to go to hell for something, thou wilt carry thy full ladle thither. No greater plague can befall a man than power without grace. Such great ones in the world, while here make a brave shew, like chief commanders and field-officers at the head of their regiments, the common soldiers are poor creatures to them; but when the army is beaten, and all taken prisoners, then they fling off their scarf and feather, and would be glad to pass for the meanest in the army. Happy would Devils, Princes and great ones in the world be, if then they could appear in the habit of some poor sneaks to receive their sentence as such; but then their titles, and dignity, and riches shall be read, not for their honour, but for their shame and damnation.

*Use 2.* It shews the folly of those that think it such an easy matter to get Heaven. If the Devil be so mighty, and Heaven's way so full of them, then sure it will cost hot water before we can display our banners on the walls of the *New Jerusalem*. Yet it is plain many think otherwise, by the provision they make for their march. If you should see a man walking forth without a cloak, or with a very thin one, you will say, Surely he fears no foul weather; or one riding a long journey alone, and without arms, you will conclude he expects no thieves on the road. All (if you ask them) will tell you they are on their way to Heaven, but

but how few care for the company of the Saints, as if they needed not their fellowship in the journey? Most go naked, without so much as any thing like armour, not enough to gain the name of professors, others, it may be, will shew you some vain slight hopes on the mercy of God, without any Scripture-bottom, and with these content themselves, which will like a rusty unsound pistol fly in their own face, when they come to use it: and is it any wrong to say these make nothing of getting Heaven? Surely these men (many of whom thrive so well in the world) never got their estates with so little care as they think to get Heaven. Ask them why they follow their trade so close, they will tell you estates are not got by sleeping, families are not provided for with the hands in the pocket, they meet with many rooks and cheats in their dealing, who, should they not look to themselves, would soon undo them: and are there none that thou needest fear will put a cheat on thy soul, and bereave thee of thy crown of glory if they can? Thou art blinder than the Prophet's servant, if thou seest not more Devils encompassing thee than he saw men about *Samaria*. Thy worldly trade they will not hinder, nay, may be, help thee to sinful tricks in that, to hinder thee in this: but if once thou resolve to seek Christ and his Grace, they will oppose thee to thy face; they are under an oath, as Paul's enemies were, to take away the life of thy soul if they can; desperate creatures themselves, who know their own doom is irrecoverable, and sell their own lives they will as dear as they can. Now what folly is it to betray thy soul into their hands, when Christ stands by to be thy convoy? Out of him thou art a lost creature, thou canst not defend thyself alone against Satan, nor with Satan against God. If thou close with Christ, thou art delivered from one of thy enemies, and him the most formidable, God I mean; yea, he is become thy friend, who will stiek close to thee in thy conflict with the other.

*Use 3.* To the Saints: Be not ye dismayed at this report which the Scripture makes of Satan's power; let them fear him who fear not God. What are these mountains of power and pride before thee, O Christian, who servest a God that can make a worm thresh a mountain! The greatest hurt he can do thee, is by nourishing this false fear of him in thy bosom. It is observed (*Bernard* saith) of some beasts in the forest,  
*Plerunq;*

*Pterung; superant leonem ferientem, quæ non sustinent rugientem*; though they are too hard for the lion in fight, yet tremble when he roars. Thus the Christian, when he comes to the pinch indeed is able, through Christ, to trample Satan under his feet; yet before the conflict, stands trembling at the thought of him. Labour therefore to get a right understanding of Satan's power, and then this lion will not appear so fierce as you paint him in your melancholy fancy. Three considerations will relieve you, when at any time you are beset with the fears of his power.

First, It is a derived power; he hath it not in himself, but by patent from another, and that no other but God; *All powers are of him*, whether on earth or in hell. This truth, subscribed in faith, would first secure thee (Christian) that Satan's power shall never hurt thee. Would thy Father give him a sword to injure thee his child? *I have created the smith* (saith God) *that bloweth the coals, I have created the waster to destroy*, and therefore assures them, *that no weapon formed against them shall prosper*, Isa. liv. 16, &c. If God provides his enemies arms, they shall (I warrant you) be such as will do them little service. When Pilate thought to scare Christ with what he could do towards the saving or taking away his life, he replies, *that he could do nothing except it were given from above*, John xix. 10. as if he had said, Do your worst, I know who sealed your commission.

Secondly, This considered, would meeken and quiet the soul, when troubled by Satan within, or his instruments without. 'Tis Satan buffets, man persecutes me, but God who gives them both power; *the Lord* (saith David) *bids him curse*; *the Lord* (saith Job) *hath given, and the Lord hath taken*. This keeps the King's peace in both their bosoms. O Christian, look not on the Jailor that whips thee, may be he is cruel; but read the warrant, who wrote that, and at the bottom thou shalt find thy Father's hand.

Secondly, Satan's power is limited, and that two ways; he cannot do what he will, and he shall not do what he can.

First, He cannot do what he will: his desires are boundless, they walk not only to and fro here below, but in Heaven itself, where he is pulling down his once fellow angels, knocking down the carved work of the glorious temple, as  
with

with axes and hammers; yea, dethroning God, and setting himself in his place. This fool saith in his heart, there is no God; but he cannot do this, nor many other things which his cankered malice stirs him up to wish; he is but a creature, and so hath the length of his tether, to which he is staked, and cannot exceed; and if God be safe, then thou also, for thy life is hid with Christ in God; *if I live* (saith Christ) *you shall live also*: You are engraven on the table of his heart; if he plucks one away, he must the other also. *Again*, as he cannot hurt the *being* of God, so he cannot pry into the *bosom* of God. He knows not *man's*, much less the thoughts of God. The astrologers nor their master could bring back *Nebuchadnezzar's* dream. As men have their closets for their own privacy, where none can enter in but with their key, so God keeps the heart as his with-drawing room, shut to all-besides himself; and therefore when he takes upon him to foretel events, if God teach him not his lesson, nor second causes help him, he is beside his book; so, to save his credit, delivers them dubiously; that his text may bear a gloss suitable to the effect whatever it is. And when he is bold to tell the state of a person, there is no weight to be laid on his judgment; *Job* was an hypocrite in his mouth, but God proved him a liar. He cannot hinder those purposes and counsels of God he knows. He knew Christ was to come in the flesh, and did his worst, but could not hinder his landing; though there were many devices in his heart, yet the counsel of the Lord concerning him did stand, yea, was delivered by the mid-wifery of Satan's suggesting, and his instruments executing his lust, as they thought, by fulfilling God's counsel against themselves. He cannot ravish thy will, *Diabolus non est jussor vitiorum, sed incentor*. He cannot command thee to sin against thy will; he can *motum agrere*, make the soul go faster that is on its way, as the wind carries the tide with more swiftness, but he cannot turn the stream of the heart contrary to its own course and tendency.

Secondly, Satan's power is so limited, that he shall not do what he can: God lets out so much of his wrath as shall praise him, and be as a stream to set his purpose of love to his Saints on work, and then lets down the flood-gate, by restraining the residue thereof: God ever takes him off before

fore he can finish his work on a Saint. He can (if God suffers him) rob the Christian of much of his joy, and disturb his peace by his cunning insinuation, but he is under command; he stands like a dog by the table, while the Saints sit at this sweet feast of comfort, but dares not stir to take off their cheer, his Master's eye is on him. The want of this consideration hinders God in his praise, and we of our comfort, God having locked up our strength in the performance of our duty. Did the Christian consider what Satan's power is, and who dams it up, this would always be a song of praise in his mouth. Hath Satan power to rob and burn, kill and slay, torment the body, distress the mind? Who may I think that I am out of his hands? Doth Satan love me better than *Job*? or am I out of his sight. Is his courage cooled, or his wrath appeased, that I escape? No, none of these, his wrath is not against one, but all the Saints; his eye is on thee, and his arm can reach thee; his spirit is not broke, nor his stomach stayed with such millions he hath devoured, but keen as ever, yea, sharper because now he sees God ready to take away, and the end of the world drawing on so fast. 'Tis thy God alone whom thou art beholden to for all this; his eye keepeth thee, when Satan finds the *good man* asleep, then he finds our *good God* awake; therefore thou art not consumed, because he changeth not. Did his eye slumber or wander one moment, there would need no other flood to drown thee, yea, the whole world, than what would come out of this dragon's mouth.

Thirdly, Satan's power is ministerial, appointed by God for the service and benefit of the Saints: 'tis true (as it is said of the proud Assyrian) *he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so*, Isa. x. 7. it is in his heart to destroy those he tempts: but no matter what he thinks. As Luther comforted himself, when told what had passed at the diet at *Noremburg* against the Protestants, that *it was decreed there, but otherwise in Heaven*; so for the Saints comfort, the thoughts which God thinks to them are peace, while Satan's are ruin to their graces, and destruction to their souls; his counsel shall stand in spite of the Devil. The very *Mittimus* which God makes, when he commits any of his Saints to the Devil's prison runs thus, *Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day*

*of the Lord Jesus*, 1 Cor. v. 5. So that tempted Saints may say, we had perished, if we had not perished to our own thinking. This Leviathan while he thinks to swallow them up, is but sent of God (as the whale to *Jonah*) to waft them safe to land. *Some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge them, and to make them white*, Dan. xi. 35. This God intends when he lets his children fall into temptation, as we do with our linen, the spots they get at our feasts, are taken out by washing, rubbing, and laying them out to bleach. The Saints' spots, are most in peace, plenty and prosperity, and they never recover their whiteness to such a degree, as when they come from under Satan's scowering. We do too little not to fear Satan, we should comfort ourselves with the usefulness and subserviency of his temptations to our good. *All things are yours*, who are Christ's. He that hath given life to be yours, hath given death also. He that hath given Heaven for your inheritance, *Paul and Cephas*, his ministers and ordinances to help you thither, hath given the world with all the afflictions of it, yea, the Prince of it too, with all his wrath and power, in order to the same end. This indeed is love and wisdom in a riddle, but you who have the spirit of Christ can unfold it.

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## CHAP. V.

*Of the Time when, the Place where, and the Subjects whom Satan rules.*

*Against the Rulers of the Darkness of this World.*

THESE words contain the third branch in the description of our great enemy the Devil; and they hold forth the proper seat of his empire, with a three-fold boundary; he is not *lord over all*, that is the incommunicable title of God:

but a *ruler of the darkness of this world*, where the time, place, and subjects of his empire are stinted.

1. The time when this Prince hath his rule, *In this world*; that is now, not hereafter.

2. The place where he rules, *In this world*; that is, here below, not in Heaven.

3. The subjects or persons whom he rules, not all in this lower world neither; and they are wrapt up in these words, *The darkness of this world*. First, of the first boundary.

## SECT. II.

1. The time when he rules; so this word (*world*) may be taken in the text for the little spot of time, which (like an inconsiderable parenthesis) is clasped in on either side with vast eternity, called sometimes the *present world*, Tit. ii. 12. On this stage of time this Mock-King acts the part of a Prince, but when Christ comes to take down this scaffold at the end of this world, then he shall be degraded, his crown taken off, his sword broke over his head, and he hissed off with scorn and shame; yea, of a Prince, become a close prisoner in Hell: no more then shall he infest the Saints, no, nor rule the wicked; but he with them, and they with him, shall lie under the immediate execution of God's wrath. For this very end Christ hath his patent and commission, which he will not give up *till he shall have put down all rule*, 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25. Then, and not till then, will he deliver up his œconomical kingdom to his Father, when he shall have put down all rule; *for he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet*. Satan is cast already, his doom is past upon him, as *Adam's* was upon his first sin, but full execution is stayed till the end of the world. The Devil knows it, it is an article in his creed, which made him trembling ask Christ why he came *to torment him before his time*.

*Use 1.* This brings ill news to the wicked. Your Prince cannot long sit in his throne; sinners at present have a merry time of it, if it would hold; they rejoice, while Christ's disciples weep and mourn; they rustle in their silks, while the saint goes in his rags. Princes are not more careful to oblige their courtiers with pensions and preferments, than



than the Devil is to gratify his followers. He hath his rewards also; *All this will I give thee. Am not I able to promote thee*, saith *Balak* to *Balaam*? O'tis strange (and yet not strange, considering the degeneracy of man's nature) to see how Satan carries sinners after him with this golden hook. Let him but present such a bait as honour, pelf, or pleasure, and their hearts skip after it as a dog would at a crust; he makes them sin for a morsel of bread: the naughty heart of man loves the wages of unrighteousness (which the Devil promiseth) so dearly, that it fears not the dreadful wages which the great God threatens. As sometimes you shall see a spaniel so greedy of a bone, that he will leap into the very river for it, if you throw it thither, and by that time he comes thither, it is sunk, and he gets nothing but a mouthful of water for his pains: thus sinners will catch at their desired pleasures, honours, and profits, swimming through the very threatenings of the word to them, and oftentimes they lose even what they gaped for. Thus *God kept Balaam* (as *Balak* told him) *from honour*, Numb. xxiv. 11. But however they speed here, they are sure to lose themselves everlastingly without repentance. They that are resolved they will have these things, are the men that fall into the Devil's snare, and are led into those foolish and hurtful lusts which will drown them in perdition, 1 *Tim.* vi. 9. O poor sinners! were it not wisdom before you truck with the Devil, to enquire what title he can give you to these goodly vanities? Will he settle them as a free estate upon you? Can he secure your bargain, and keep you from suits of law? or is he able to put two lives into the purchase, that when you die you may not be left destitute in another world? Alas, poor wretches! you shall ere long see what a cheat he hath put on you, from whom you are like to have nought but *Caveat Emptor*; let the buyer look to that. Yea, this great Prince that brags so much, what he will give you, must down himself; and a sad Prince must needs make a sad court: O what howling will there then be of Satan and his vassals together! O, but saith the sinner, the pleasures and honours sin and Satan offer, are present, and those which Christ promiseth we must stay for. This indeed is that which takes most. *Demas*, saith *Paul*, *forsook me, having loved this present world*, 2 *Tim.* iv. 10. 'Tis present indeed (sinners) for

you cannot say it will be yours the next moment; your present felicity is going, and the saints (though future) is coming never to go: and who for a gulp of pottage, and sensual enjoyments at present, would part with a reversion of such a kingdom? except thou art of his mind, who thought he had nothing but what he had swallowed down his throat,

*Hæc habeo quæ edis quæque exaturata libido  
Hæusit.*—

Which *Cicero* would say, was more fit to be writ on an ox's grave than a man's. Vile wretch, that thinkest 'tis not better to deal with God for time, than the Devil for ready pay. *Tertullian* wonders at the folly of the *Roman* ambition, who would endure all manner of hardship in field and fight, for no other thing but to obtain at last the honour to be Consul, which he calls *unius anni volaticum gaudium*, a joy that flies away at the year's end. But O what a desperate madness is it for sinners then, not to endure a little hardship here, but entail on themselves the eternal wrath of God hereafter, for the short feast, and running banquet their lusts entertain them here withal, which often is not *gaudium unius horæ*, a joy that lasts an hour.

*Use 2.* Let this encourage thee, O Christian, in thy conflict with Satan; the skirmish may be sharp, but it cannot be long. Let him tempt thee, and his wicked instruments trounce thee, 'tis but a little while, and thou shalt be rid of both their evil neighbourhoods. The cloud while it drops is rolling over thy head, and then comes fair weather, and eternal sun-shine of glory. Canst thou not watch with Christ one hour or two? keep the field a few days? persevere till the battle is over, and thine enemy shall never rally more; bid faith look through the key-hole of the promise, and tell thee what it sees there laid up for him that overcomes; bid it listen and tell thee, whether it cannot hear the shouts of those crowned-Saints, as of those that are dividing the spoil, and receiving the reward of all their services and sufferings here on earth: and dost thou stand on the other side to wet thy foot with those sufferings and temptations, which like a little splash of water run between thee and glory.

## SECT. II.

Secondly, The Devil's empire is confined to place as well as time; he is the ruler of this lower world, not of the heavenly. The highest the Devil can go is the air, called the Prince thereof, as being the utmost marches of his empire, he hath nothing to do with the upper world. Heaven fears no Devil, and therefore its gates stand always open; never durst this fiend look into that holy place since he was first expelled, but rangeth to and fro here below as a vagabond excommunicated the presence of God, doing what mischief he can to Saints in their way to Heaven: But is not this matter of great joy, that Satan hath no power where the Saint's happiness lies? What hast thou (Christian) which thou needest value that is not there? Thy Christ is there, and if thou lovest him, thy heart also, which lives in the bosom of its beloved. Thy friends and kindred in Christ are there, or expected, with whom thou shalt have a merry meeting in thy father's house, notwithstanding the snare on *Tabor*, the plots of Satan which lie in the way. O friends, if you have a title to that kingdom, you are above the flight of this kite. This made *Job* a happy man indeed, who when the Devil had plundered him to his skin, and worried him almost out of that too, could then vouch Christ in the face of death and devils to be his Redeemer, whom he should with those eyes, now full of briny tears, behold, and that for himself as his own portion. It is sad with him indeed, who is robbed of all he is worth at once; but this can never be said of a Saint. The Devil took away *Job's* purse (as I may say) which put him into some straights, but he had a God in Heaven that put him into stock again. Some spending money thou hast at present in thy purse, in the activity of thy faith, the evidence of thy son-ship, and comfort flowing from the same, enlargement in duty, and the like, which Satan may for a time disturb, yea, deprive thee of, but he cannot come to the rolls to blot thy name out of the book of life; he cannot annul thy faith, make void thy relation, dry up thy comfort in the spring, though he may dam up the stream; nor hinder thee a happy issue of thy whole war with sin,  
though

though he may worst thee in a private skirmish; these all are kept in Heaven, among God's own crown-jewels, who is said to keep us by his power *through faith unto salvation*.

### SECT. III.

The third boundary of the Devil's principality is in regard of his subjects, and they are described here to be *the darkness of this world*, that is such who are in darkness. This word is used sometimes to express the desolate condition of a creature in some great distress, Isa. 1. *He that walks in darkness, and sees no light*: sometimes to express the nature of all sin, so *Ephes. v. 1.* sin is called the work of darkness; sometimes the particular sin of ignorance; often set out by the darkness of the night, blindness of the eye; all these I conceive may be meant, but chiefly the latter: for though Satan makes a foul stir in the soul that is in the darkness of sorrow, whether it be from outward crosses, or inward desertions; yet if the creature be not in the darkness of sin at the same time, though he may disturb his peace as an enemy, yet he cannot be said to rule as a Prince. Sin only sets Satan in the throne; so that I shall take the words in the two latter interpretations.

First, for the darkness of sin in general.

Secondly, for the darkness of ignorance in special; and the sense will be, That the Devil's rule is over those that are in a state of sin and ignorance, not over those who are sinful or ignorant, so he would take hold of Saints as well as others; but over those who are in a state of sin, which is set out by the abstract, *Ruler of the darkness*, the more to express the fulness of the sin and ignorance that possesseth Satan's slaves; and the notes will be two.

First, Every soul in a state of sin is under the rule of Satan.

Secondly, Ignorance above other things enslaves a soul to Satan; and therefore all sins are set out by that which chiefly expresseth this, viz. darkness.

*Doct.* Every soul in a state of sin, is under the rule of Satan; under which point these two things must be enquired.

First, The reason why sin is set out by darkness.

Secondly,

Secondly, How every one in such a state appears to be under the Devil's rule.

First, sin may be called darkness, because the spring and common cause of sin in man is darkness. The external cause Satan, who is the great promoter of it, is a cursed spirit, held in chains of darkness. The internal is the blindness and darkness of the soul: we may say, when any one sins, he doth he knows not what, as Christ said of his murderers. Did the creature know the true worth of the soul (which he now sells for a song) the glorious amiable nature of God and his holy ways, the matchless love of God in Christ, the poisonous nature of sin, and all these not by a sudden beam darted into the window at a sermon, and gone again, like a flash of lightning, but by an abiding light; this would spoil the Devil's market, and poor creatures would not readily take this toad into their bosoms; sin goes in disguise, and so is welcome.

Secondly, it is darkness, because it brings darkness into the soul, and that naturally and judicially.

First, Naturally. There is a noxious quality in sin, offensive to the understanding, which is to the soul what the eye and palate are to the body; it discerns of things, and distinguisheth true from false, as the eye, white from black: it trieth words as the mouth tasteth meats. Now as there are some things bad for the sight, and others bad for the palate, vitiating it, so that it shall not know sweet from bitter; so here sin besots the creature, and makes it injudicious, that he who could see such a practice absurd and base in others before, when once he had drank of this enchanting cup himself, (as one that hath foredone his understanding) is mad of it himself, not able now to see the evil of it, or use his reason against it. Thus *Saul*, before he had debauched his conscience, thinks the witch worthy of death; but after he had trodden his conscience hard with other foul sins, goes to ask counsel of one himself.

Again, sin brings darkness judicially; such have been threatened, who have run out of God's school into the Devil's, by *rebelling against light*, that they shall *die without knowledge*, Job xxxvi. 10. 12. Should the candle burn waste, when the creature hath more mind to play than work?

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Sin runs into darkness. Impostors bring in their *dammable heresies privily*, like those who sell bad ware, loth to come to the market, where the standard tries all; but put it off in secret. So in moral wickedness; sinners, like beasts, go out in the night for their prey, loth to be seen, afraid to come where they should be found out. Nothing more terrible to sinners than light of truth, *John iii. 19. Because their deeds are evil.* *Felix* was so nettled with what *Paul* spake, that he could not sit out the sermon, but flings away in haste, and adjourns the hearing of *Paul* till a convenient season, but he never could find one. The sun is not more troublesome in hot countries, than truth is to those who sit under the powerful preaching of it; and therefore as those seldom come abroad in the heat of the day, and when they must, have their devices over their heads to screen them from the sun; so sinners shun as much as may be the preaching of the word; but if they must go to keep in with their relations, or for other carnal advantages, they, if possible, will keep off the power of truth, either by sleeping the sermon away, or prating it away with any foolish imagination which Satan sends to bear them company, and chat with them at such a time; or by chusing such a cool preacher to sit under, whose toothless discourse shall rather flatter than trouble, rather tickle their fancy than prick their consciences; and then their sore eyes can look upon the light. *Florescentem amant veritatem qui non redarguentur*; they dare handle and look on the sword with a delight when in a rich scabbard, who would run away to see it drawn.

Fourthly, Sin is darkness for its uncomfortableness, and that in a threefold respect.

First, Darkness is uncomfortable, as it shuts out all employment. What could the *Egyptians* do under the plague of darkness, but sit still? and this to an active spirit is trouble enough. Thus, in a state of sin, man is an un-serviceable creature, he can do his God no service acceptably, spoils every thing he takes in hand, like one running up and down in a shop when the windows are shut, doth nothing right. It may be writ on the grave of every sinner, who lives and dies in that state, "Here lies the man, that never did God an hour's work in all his life."

Secondly,

Secondly, Darkness is uncomfortable in point of enjoyment; be there never such rare pictures in the room, if dark, who the better? A soul in a state of sin may possess much, but enjoys nothing: this is a sore evil, and little thought of. One thought of its state of enmity to God would drop bitterness into every cup; all he hath smells of hell-fire; and a man at a rich feast would enjoy it but little, if he smelt fire, ready to burn his house and himself.

Thirdly, Darkness fills with terrors; fears in the night are most dreadful; a state of sin is a state of fear. Men that owe much, have no quiet, but when they are asleep, and not then neither, the cares and fears of the day sink so deep, as makes their rest troublesome and unquiet in the night. The wicked hath no peace, but when his conscience sleeps, and that sleeps but brokenly, awaking often with sick fits of terror. When he hath most prosperity, he is scared like a flock of birds in a corn-field at every piece going off. He eats in fear, and drinks in fear; when afflicted, he expects worse behind, and knows not what this may spread to, and where it may lay him, whether in hell or not, he knows not, and therefore trembles (as one in the dark) not knowing but his next step may be into the pit.

Fourthly, Sin leads to utter darkness; utter darkness is darkness to the utmost. Sin in its full height, and wrath in its full heat together; both universal, both eternal. Here's some mixture, peace and trouble, pain and ease, sin and thoughts of repenting, sin and hopes of pardon; there the fire of wrath shall burn without slacking, and sin run parallel with torment. Hell-birds are no change-lings: their torment makes them sin, and their sin feeds their torment, both unquenchable, one being fuel to another.

2. Let us see how it appears, that such as are under a state of sin, are under the rule of Satan. Sinners are called the children of the Devil, 1 *John* iii. 10. and who rules the child but the father? They are slaves; who rules the slave but the master? They are the very mansion-house of the Devil; where hath a man command, but in his own house? *I will go to my house*, *Matt.* xii. 44. As if the Devil had said, I have walked among the Saints of God, to and fro, knocking at this door and that, and none will bid me wel-

come, I can find no rest; well, I know where I may be bold; I'll even go to my own house, and there I am sure to rule the roast without controul; and *when he comes, he finds it empty, swept and garnished*; that is, all ready for his entertainment. Servants make the house trim and handsome against their master comes home, especially when he brings guests with him, as here the Devil brings *seven more*.

Look to the sinner; there is nothing he is or hath, but the Devil hath dominion over it: *He rules the whole man*, their minds blinding them. All the sinner's apprehension of things are shapen by Satan: he looks on sin with the Devil's spectacles: he reads the word with the Devil's comment: he sees nothing in its native colours, but is under a continual delusion. The very wisdom of a wicked man is said to be *devilish*, Jam. iii. 15. *Daimoniodes*, or *Devil-like*, because taught by the Devil, and also such as the Devil's is, *wise only to do evil*. *He commands their wills*, though not to force them, yet effectually to draw them. *His work* (saith Christ) *ye will do*. You are resolved on your way, the Devil hath got your hearts, and him you will obey; and therefore when Christ comes to recover his throne, he finds the soul in an uproar, as *Ephesus* at *Paul's* sermon, crying him down, and *Diana* up. We will not have this man to reign over us; what is the Almighty that we should serve him? *He rules over all their members*; they are called *weapons of unrighteousness*; all at the Devil's service; as all the arms of a kingdom, to defend the Prince against any that shall invade. The head to plot, the hand to act, the feet swift to carry the body up and down about his service; *He rules over all he hath*. Let God come, in a poor member, and beseech him to lend him a penny, or bestow a morsel to refresh his craving bowels; and the covetous wretch's hand of charity is withered, that he cannot stretch it forth: but let Satan call, and his purse flies open, and heart also. *Nabal* that could not spare a few fragments for *David* and his followers, could make *a feast like a Prince*, to satisfy his own lust of gluttony and drunkenness. *He commands their time*; when God calls to duty, to pray, to hear, no time all the week to be spared for that; but if the sinner hears there is a merry meeting, a knot of good fellows at the ale-house,



all is thrown aside to wait on his lord and master; calling left at sixes and sevens, yea, wife and children crying (may be starving) while the wretch is pouring out his very blood (in wasting his livelihood) at the foot of his lust. The sinner is in the *bond of iniquity*; and being bound, he must obey. He is said to go after his lusts, *as the fool to the stocks*, Prov. vii. 22. The pinioned malefactor can as soon untie his own arms and legs, and so run from his keeper, as he from his lusts. *They are servants*, and their members instruments of sin: even as the workman takes up his ax, and it resists not; so doth Satan dispose of them, except God saith nay.

See here the deplored condition of every one in a state of sin. He is under the rule of Satan, and government of hell. What tongue can utter, what heart can conceive the misery of this state! It was a dismal day which Christ foretold, *Matt. xxiv. When the abomination of desolation should be seen, standing in the Holy Place: then (saith Christ) let him that is in Judea flee into the mountains.* But what was that to this? they are but men, though abominable; these Devils. They did but stand in the material temple, and defile and deface that; but these display their banners in the souls of men, pollute that throne, which is more glorious than the material heaven itself, made for God alone to sit in. They exercised their cruelties at farthest on the bodies of men, killing and torturing them; here the precious souls of men are destroyed. When *David* would curse to purpose the enemies of God, he prays that *Satan may be at their right hand*. 'Tis strange sinners should no more tremble at this, who, should they but see their swine, or a beast bewitched and possessed of the Devil, run headlong into the sea, would cry out as half undone? and is not one soul more worth than all these? What a plague is it to have Satan possess thy heart and spirit, hurrying thee in the fury of thy lusts to perdition? O poor man! what a sad change hast thou made? Thou who wouldest not sit under the meek and peaceable government of God, thy rightful Lord, art paid for thy rebellion against him, in the cruelty of this tyrant, who writes all his laws in the blood of his subjects; and why will you sit any longer, (O sinners) under the shadow of this bramble, from whom you can expect nothing but eternal fire, to come at last

and devour you? Behold, Christ is in the field, sent of God to recover his right. His royal standard is pitched in the gospel, and proclamation made, that if any poor sinner, weary of the Devil's government, and heavy laden with the miserable chains of his spiritual bondage, (so as these irons of his sins enter into his very soul to afflict it with the sense of them) shall thus come, and repair to Christ, he shall have protection from God's justice, the Devil's wrath, and sin's dominion: in a word, *he shall have rest*, and that *glorious*, *Mat. xi. 28. Isa. xi. 10.* Usually when a people have been ground with the oppression of some bloody tyrant, they are apt enough to long for a change, and to listen to any overture that gives them hope of liberty, though reached by the hand of a stranger, who may prove as bad as the other; yet bondage is so grievous, that people desire to change, (as sick men their beds,) though they find little ease thereby. Why then should deliverance be unwelcome to you, sinners? Deliverance brought not by a stranger whom you need fear what his design is upon you, but your near kinsman in blood, who cannot mean you ill, but he must first hate his own flesh; and who ever did that? Not he, who, though he took part of our flesh, that he might have the right of being our Redeemer; yet would have no kindred with us in the sinfulness of our nature, *Heb. ii. 14, 15.* And 'tis sin that makes us cruel, yea, to our own flesh. What can we expect from him but pure mercy, who is himself pure? They are *the mercies of the wicked which are cruel*, *Prov. xii. 10.* Believe it (Sirs) Christ counts it his honour, that he is a King of a willing people, and not of slaves. He comes to make you free, not to bring you into bondage; to make you Kings, not vassals. None give Christ an evil word, but those who never were his subjects. Enquire but of those who have tried both Satan's service and Christ's: they are best able to resolve you what they are. You see when a soul comes over from Satan's quarters unto Christ's, and has but once the experience of that sweetness which is in his service, there's no getting him back to his old drudgery, as they say of those who come out of the north (which is cold and poor) they like the warm south so well, they seldom go back more. What more dreadful to a gracious soul than to be delivered into the hands of Satan? or fall under the power of his lusts? It would chuse rather

to leap into a burning furnace, than be commanded by them. This is the great request a child of God makes, that he would rather whip him in his house, than turn him out of it, to become a prey to Satan. O sinners did you know (which you cannot till you come over to Christ, and embrace him as your Lord and Saviour) what the privileges of Christ's servants are, and what gentle usage Saints have at Christ's hands, you would say those were the only happy men in the world, which stand continually before him. His laws are writ, not with his subject's blood (as Satan's are) but with his own. All his commands are acts of grace; 'tis a favour to be employed about them. To you 'tis given to believe, yea to *suffer*, Phil. i. 29. Such an honour the Saints esteem it to do any thing he commands, that they count God rewards them for one piece of service, if he enables them for another. *This I had* (saith David) *because I kept thy precepts. Psal, cxix. 56.* what was the great reward he got? see *ver. 55. I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and kept thy law*; then follows, *This I had*: He got more strength and skill to keep the law for the future, by his obedience past; and was he not well paid (think you) for his pains? *There's fruit even in holiness*, the Christian hath in hand, which he eats while he is at work, that may stay his stomach until the full reward comes, which is *eternal life*, Rom. vi. 22. Jesus Christ is a Prince that loves to see his people thrive, and grow rich under his government. This is he whom sinners are so afraid of, that when he bids them come forth from their prison, they chuse rather to bore their ears to the Devil's post, than to enjoy this blessed liberty. It is no wonder that some of the Saints have (indeed *when tortured*) *not accepted deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection*, Heb. xi. 35. But what a riddle is this, that forlorn souls bound with the chains of their lusts, and the irresistible decree of God for their damnation, if they believe not on the Lord Jesus, should, as they are driving to execution, refuse deliverance? this may set heaven and earth on wondering. Surely, dying in their sins, they cannot hope to have a better resurrection than they have a death. I am afraid rather, that they do not firmly believe that they shall have any resurrection; and then no wonder they make so light of Christ, who think themselves safe, when once earthed in this burrow of the grave. But let sinners know, 'tis not the grave can hold them, when the day of assizes comes,  
and

and the judge calls for the prisoners to the bar. The grave was never intended to be a sanctuary to defend sinners from the hand of justice, but a close prison to secure them against the day of trial, that they be forth-coming. Then sinners shall be digged out of their burrows, and dragged out of their holes to answer their contempt of Christ and his grace. O how greatly will you be astonished to see him become your judge, whom you now refuse to be your King! to hear that gospel witness against you for your damnation, which at the same time acquit others for their salvation! What think you to do, sinners, in that day? will you cry and scream for mercy at Christ's hand. Alas, when the sentence is past, your faces will immediately be covered: condemned prisoners are not allowed to speak: tears then are unprofitable, when no piace is left for repentance, either in Christ's heart or your own. Or meanest thou to apply thyself to thy old Lord, in whose service thou hast undone thy soul, and cry to him, as she to *Ahab*, help O King: Alas, thine eye shall see him in the same condemnation with thyself. Hadst thou not better now renounce the Devil's rule, whilst thou may be received into Christ's government? pour out thy tears and cries now for mercy and grace, when they are to be had, than to save them for another world to no purpose?

*Quest.* But possibly, thou wilt say; *How may I that am a home-born slave to sin, yea, who have lived so many years under his cursed rule, get out of his dominion and power, and be translated into the kingdom of Christ?*

*Answ.* The difficulty of this great work lies not in pre-vailling with Christ, to receive thee for his subject, who refuseth none that in truth of heart desire to come under his shadow. It doth not stand with his design to reject any such. Do Physicians use to chide their patients away? Lawyers their clients? Or Generals discourage those who fall off from the enemy, and come to their side? surely no. When *David* was in the field, 'tis said, 1 Sam. xxii. 2. *Every one that was in distress, in debt, or discontent, gathered themselves to him, and he became a Captain over them.* And so will Christ be to every one that is truly discontented with Satan's government, and upon an inward dislike thereof, repairs to him. But the main business will be to take thee off from thy engagements to thy lusts and Satan, till which be done,

done, Christ will not own thee as a subject, but look on thee as a spy. It fares with sinners as with servants. There may be fallings out between them and their masters, and high words pass between them, that you would think they would take up their pack and be gone in all haste; but the fray is soon over, and by next morning all is forgot, and the servants are as hard at their work as ever. O how oft are sinners taking leave of their lusts, and giving warning to their old masters, they will repent and reform, and what not? but in a few days they have repented of their repentance, and deformed their reformings, which shews they were drunk with some passion, when they thought or spake this; and no wonder they reverse all when they come to their true temper: Now because Satan has many policies, which he useth to keep his hold of sinners; I shall discover some of them, which if thou canst withstand, it will be no hard matter to bring thee out of his power and rule.

First, Satan doth his utmost, that sinners may have any serious thoughts of the miserable state they are in, while under his rule; or hear any thing from others, which might the least unsettle their minds from his service. Consideration (he knows) is the first step to repentance: he that doth not consider his ways, what they are, and whither they lead him, is not like to change them in haste. Israel stirred not, till *Moses* came, and had some discourse with them about their woeful slavery, and the gracious thoughts of God towards them; then they begin to desire to be gone. *Pharaoh* soon bethought him what consequence might follow upon this, and cunningly labours to prevent it, by doubling their task: *Ye are idle, ye are idle, therefore ye say, Let us go, and do sacrifice to the Lord. Go therefore and work*, Exod. v. 17, 18. As if he had said, Have you so much spare time to think of gadding into the Wilderness, and have you your seditious conventicles (*Moses* and you) to lay their plots together? I will break the knot; give them more work, scatter them all over the land to gather straw that they may not meet to entice one another's hearts from my service. Thus Satan is very jealous of the sinner, afraid every Christian that speaks to him, or ordinance he hears, should inveigle him. By his good-will he should come at neither; no, nor have a thought of heaven or hell from one end of the week to the other; and that he may have as few as may be  
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he keeps him full-handed with work. The sinner grinds, and he is filling the hopper, that the mill may not stand still. He is with the sinner as soon as he wakes, and fills his wretched heart with some wicked thoughts, which, as a morning draught, may keep him from the infection of any savour of good, that may be breathed on him by others in the day-time.

All the day long he watcheth him, as the master would do his man, that he fears will run away. And at night he, like a careful jailor, locks him up again in his chamber, with more bolts and fetters upon him, not suffering him to sleep as he lies on his bed, *till he hath done some mischief*, Luke xv. Ah poor wretch! was ever slave so looked to? As long as the Devil can keep thee thus, thou art his own sure enough. The Prodigal *came to himself*, before he came to his Father. He considered what a starving condition he was in; his husks were poor meat, and yet he had not enough of them neither; and how easily he might mend his commons, if he had but grace to go home, and humble himself to his Father. Now, and not till now, he goes: resolve thus, poor sinner, to sit down, and consider what thy state is, and what it might be, if thou wouldest but change the bondage of Satan for the sweet government of Jesus Christ. First, Ask thy soul, whether the Devil can, after thou hast worn out thy miserable life here in his drudgery, prefer thee to a happy state in the other world, or so much as secure thee from a state of torment and woe! If he cannot, whether there be not one *Jesus Christ*, who is able and willing to do it? and if so, whether it be not cruelty to thy precious soul, to stay any longer under the shadow of this bramble, when thou mayest make so blessed a change? A few of these thoughts abidingly laid home to thy soul, may (God striking in with them) shake the foundations of the Devil's prison, and make thee haste as fast from him, as one out of a house on fire.

Secondly, Satan hath his instruments to oppose the messengers and message which God sends by them to bring the sinner out of Satan's rule. When *Moses* comes to deliver *Israel* out of the *Egyptian* bondage, up starts *Jannes* and *Jambres* to resist him. When *Paul* preacheth to the *Deputy*, the Devil hath his chaplain at court to hinder him; *Elymas*, one full of all subtilty and mischief. Some or other he will

find, when God is parlying with a sinner, and persuading him to come over to Christ that shall labour to clog the work. Either carnal friends he sends to plead his cause, or old companions in wickedness; these bestir them, one while labouring to jeer him out of his new way; or if that take not, by turning their old love into bitter wrath against him for leaving the apostate, and leaving him so. Or if yet he will not be stepped in his way, then he hath his daubing Preachers, (like *Job's* messengers, the last the worst,) who with their soul-flattering, or rather murdering doctrine, shall go about to heal his wound slightly. Now as ever you desire to get out of Satan's bondage, have a care of all these, harden thyself against the intreaties of carnal friends and relations. Resolve that if thy children should hang about thy knees to keep thee from Christ, thou wilt throw them away. If thy father and mother should lie prostrate at thy foot, rather than not go to Christ, go over their very backs to him. Never can we part with their love upon such advantageous terms as these. And for thy brethren in iniquity, I hope thou dost not mean to stay till thou hast their good will, then even ask the Devil's also. Heaven is but little worth, if thou hast not a heart to despise a little shame, and bear a few taunts from profane *Ishmaels* for thy hopes of it. Let them spit on thy face, Christ will wipe it off; let them laugh, so thou winnest. If they follow not thy example before they die, the shame will be their own; God himself shall spit it on their face before men and angels, and then kick them into hell. And lastly, escape but the snare of those flatterers, who use their tongues only to lick sinners' consciences whole with their *placentia's*, soothing doctrine, and thou art fair for a Christ; ask not counsel of them, they may go about to give you ease, but all those stitches with which they sew up thy wounds, must be ripped open, or thou die for it.

Thirdly, Satan labours to put off the sinner with delays. Slighting thoughts of repenting he fears not, he can give sinners leave to talk what they will do; so he can beg time, and by his art keep such thoughts from coming to a head, and ripening into a present resolution; few are in hell but thought of repenting, but Satan so handled the matter, that they could never pitch upon the time in earnest when to do it. If ever thou meanest to get out of his clutches, fly out

of his doors, and run for thy life, where ever this warning finds thee, stay not, though in the midst of thy joys, with which thy lusts entertain thee: As the paper which came to *Brentius* (from that Senator his dear friend) took him at supper with his wife and children, and bade him flee *cito, citius, citissime*; which he did, leaving his dear company and sweet cheer; so do thou, or thou may repent thy stay when 'tis too late. A vision charged the *wise men* to go back another way, and not so much as see *Herod*, though he had charged them otherwise. O go not back, drunkard, to thy good fellows, adulterer to thy queans; covetous wretch, to thy usury and unlawful gain: turn another way, and gratify not the Devil a moment. The command saith, now repent; the imperative hath no future tense. God saith, *To-day, while it is to-day*: the Devil saith, to-morrow; which wilt thou obey, God or him? Thou sayest, thou meanest at last to do it, then why not now? Wilt thou stand with God for a day or two, huckle with him for a penny? Heaven is not such a hard pennyworth, but thou mayest come up to his terms; and which is the morrow thou meanest? thou hast but a day in thy life for ought thou knowest, where then canst thou find a morrow for repentance? but shouldest thou have as many days to come as *Methuselah* lived, yet know, sin is hereditary, and such sort of diseases grow more upon us with our years. 'Tis with long-accustomed sinners, as with those who have sat long under a government, they rather like to be as they are (though but ill on it) than think of a change; or like those who in a journey have gone out of the way all the day, will rather take any new way, over hedge or ditch, than think of going so far back to be set right.

Fourthly, Satan labours to compromise the business, and bring it to a composition between him and Christ: when conscience will not be pacified, then Satan, for quiet's sake, will yield to something, as *Pharaoh* with *Moses*: after much ado, he is willing they should go, *Exod. viii. 28. And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness.* But then comes in this caution, *only you shall not go very far away.* Thus Satan will yield, the sinner may pray, and hear the word, and make a goodly profession, so he doth not go very far, but that he may have him again at night. If God hath the  
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matters, he looks for the vigils, and thus he is content the day should be divided. Doth conscience press a reformation and change of the sinner's course, rather than fail, he will grant that also; yet as *Pharaoh*, when he yielded they should go, he meant *their little ones should stay behind as a pledge for those that went*, Exod. x. 11. So Satan must have some one sin that must be spared, and no matter though it be a little one. Now if ever you would get out of the Devil's rule, make no composition with him. Christ will be King or no King. Not a hoof must be left behind, or any thing which may make an errand for thee afterwards to return. Take therefore thy everlasting farewell of every sin, as to the sincere and fixed purpose of thy heart, or thou dost nothing. *Paul* joins his faith and his purpose together, *2 Tim.* iii. 10, not the one without the other. At the promulgation of the law in *Sinai*, God did, as it were, give *Israel* the oath of allegiance to him; then he told them what law he would rule them by, and they gave their consent: this was the *espousal* which God puts them in mind of, *Jer.* ii. in which they were solemnly married together, as King and subjects. Now mark, before God would do this, he will have them out of *Egypt*. They could not obey his laws, and *Pharaoh's* idolatrous customs also, and therefore he will have them out, before he solemnly espouseth them to be a nation peculiarly his. Thou must be a widow before Christ marry thee; he will not lie by the side of another's wife. O that it were come to this! then the match would soon be made between Christ and thee. Let me ask thee, poor soul, hast thou seriously considered who Christ is, and what his sweet government is? and couldest thou find in thy heart (out of an inward abhorrence of sin and Satan, and a liking to Christ) to renounce sin and Satan, and chuse Christ for thy Lord? Doth thy soul say as *Rebecca*, *I will go*, if I could tell how to get to him. But alas! I am here a poor prisoner, I cannot shake off my fetters, and set myself at liberty to come unto Christ. Well, poor soul, canst thou groan heartily under thy bondage? then for thy comfort know, thy deliverance is at the door; he that heard the cry of *Israel* in *Egypt*, will hear thine also, yea, come and save thee out of the hands of thy lusts. He will not, as some, who entangle thy affections by making love to thee, and then give over the suit, and come at thee no more. If Christ has won thy

heart, he will be true to thee, and be at all the cost to bring thee out of thy prison-house also; yea, take the pains to come to thee himself, and bring with him these wedding-garments, in which he will carry thee from thy prison to his Father's house with joy, where thou shalt live not only as a subject under his law, but as a bride in the bosom of her love; and what can be added to thy happiness more? when thy Prince is thy husband, and that such a Prince to whom all others are vassals, even the Prince of this world himself; and yet so gracious, that his Majesty hinders not his familiar converse with thee, a poor creature, but adds to the condescension thereof, therefore God chuseth to mix names of greatness and relation together; the one to sweeten the other: *Thy Maker is thy husband, Thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. The God of the whole earth shall he be called, Isa. liv. 5.* And to usher in those promises with titles of greatest dread and terror to the creature, that hold forth the greatest condescensions of love; how can God stoop lower than to come and dwell with a poor humble soul? which is more, than if he had said, such an one should dwell with him; for a beggar to live at court is not so much as the King to dwell with him in his cottage. Yet this promise is ushered in with the most magnificent titles; *Thus saith the High and Lofty One, that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, Isa. lvii. 15.* and why such titles? but not to take away the fears which his Saints are prone to take up from them. Will the high and lofty one, (saith the humble soul) look on me, a poor worm? will the holy God come near such an unclean creature? saith the contrite one. *Isaiah* himself cried he was undone at the sight of God, and this attribute proclaimed before him, *Isa. vi.* Now God prefixeth these, that the creature may know his majesty and holiness, which seems so terrible to us, are no prejudice to his love; yea, so gracious a Prince is thy husband, that he delights rather his Saints should call him by the names of love, than state. *Thou shalt call me Ishi, and shall no more call me Baali, Hos. ii. 16.* That is my husband, not my Lord.

## SECT. IV.

*Doct.* The second point follows. Ignorance above other sins enslaves a soul to Satan, a man may be his slave, but an ignorant one can be no other. Knowledge doth not make the heart good, but it is impossible that without knowledge it should be good. There are some sins which an ignorant person cannot commit, there are more which he cannot but commit: knowledge is the key, Luke xi. 52. Christ the door, John x. Christ opens Heaven, Knowledge opens Christ. In three particulars the point will appear more fully.

First, Ignorance opens a door for sin to enter.

Secondly, As ignorance lets sin in, so it locks it up in the soul, and the soul in it.

Thirdly, As it locks it up, so it shuts all means of help out.

First, Ignorance opens the door for Satan to enter in with his troops of lusts; where the watch is blind, the city is soon taken: an ignorant man sins, and like drunken *Lot*, he knows not when the tempter comes, nor when he goes: he is like a man that walks in his sleep, knows not where he is, nor what he does. *Father, forgive them* (saith Christ) *they know not what they do.* The Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. having reprov'd the sensuality of some, verse 32. who made the consideration of death, by which others are awed from sin, a provocation to sin, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die*, he gives an account of this absurd reasoning; *All have not the knowledge of God.* An ignorant person is a man in shape; and a beast in heart. *There is no knowledge in the land*, saith the Prophet, Hosea iv. 1. and see what a regiment follows this blind Captain, swearing, lying, killing, stealing, &c. We read, 2 Tim. iii. 5. of some *laden with sin*; here are trees full of bitter fruit, and what dung shall we find at the root, that makes them so fruitful, but ignorance? such *who never come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Secondly, Ignorance, as it lets sin in, so it locks it up, and the soul in it, such an one lies in Satan's inner dungeon, where

no light of conviction comes, darkness inclines to sleep, a blind mind and drowsy conscience go together. When the storm arose the mariners, who were awake fell praying to their God; but the sleeper fears nothing. Ignorance lays the soul asleep under the hatches of stupidity. God hath planted in the beast, a natural fear of that which threatens hurt to it. Go to thrust a beast into a pit, and it hangs back, nature shews its abhorrence. Man being of a nobler nature, and subject to more dangers, God hath set a double guard on him, as a natural fear of danger, so a natural shame that covers the face at the doing any unworthy action. Now an ignorant man hath slipped from both these his keepers; he sins and blusheth not, because he knows not his guilt: he wants that Magistrate within, who should put him to shame; neither is he afraid, because he knows not his danger; therefore he plays with his sin, as a child with the waves that by and by will swallow him up. Conscience is God's alarm to call the sinner up; it doth not always ring in his ear that hath knowledge, being usually set by God to go off at some special hour; when God is speaking in an ordinance, or striking in a providence; but in an ignorant soul, this is silent. The clock cannot go when the weights are taken off; conscience is only a witness to what it knows.

Thirdly, Ignorance shuts out the means of recovery. Friends and Ministers; yea, Christ himself stands without, and cannot help the creature, as such threatenings and promises are of no use; he fears not the one, he desires not the other, because he knows neither: Heaven's way cannot be found in the dark, and therefore the first thing God doth, is to spring in with a light, and let the creature know where he is, and what the way is to get out of his prison-house, without which all attempts to escape are in vain. There is some glimmering light in all, *Non dantur puræ tenebræ*, I think is good divinity as well as philosophy: and this night-light may discover many sins, produce inward prickings of conscience for them; yea, stir up the creature to step aside, rather than drown in such broad waters. There are some sins so cruel and costly, that the most prostrate soul may in time be weary of their service for low ends: but what will all this come to, if the creature be not acquainted with Christ the true way to God, faith and repentance the only way to Christ? such an

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one after all this bustle, instead of making an escape from Satan, will run full into his mouth another way. There are some ways which at first seem right to the traveller: yet wind about so insensibly, that when a man hath gone far, and thinks himself near home, he is carried back to the place from whence he set out. This will befall every soul ignorant of Christ and the way of life through him; after many years travel, as they think, towards heaven by their good meanings, blind devotions and reformation, when they shall expect to be within sight of Heaven they shall find themselves were they were, as much slaves to Satan as ever.

*Use 1.* This speaks to you that are parents, see what need you have of instructing your children, and training them up betimes in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Till these chains of darkness be knocked off their minds, there is no possibility of getting them out of the Devil's prison; he hath no such tame slave as the ignorant soul: such an one goes before Satan (as the silly sheep before the butcher) and knows not who he is, nor whither he carries him; and can you see the Dévil driving your children to the shambles, and not labour to rescue them out of his hands? Bloody parents you are, that can thus harden your bowels against your own flesh. Now the more to provoke you to this duty, take these considerations.

1. Your relation obligeth you to take care of their precious souls. 'Tis the soul is the child rather than the body: and therefore in Scripture put for the whole man. *Abraham* and *Lot* went forth *with all the souls they had got in Horan*, Gen. xii. So, *all the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt*; that is, all the persons. The body is but the sheath; and if one should leave his sword with you to be kept safely for him, would you throw away the blade, and only preserve the scabbard? And yet parents commonly judge of their care and love to their children by providing for the outward man, by their breeding and teaching them how to live like men (as they say) when they are dead and gone, and comport themselves to their civil place and rank in the world. These things indeed are commendable; but the most weighty business of all is forgotten in the mean time, while no endeavour is used that they may live as Christians, and know how to carry themselves in duty to God or man as such, and can they do this without the knowledge of the holy rule they are to walk by? I am sure David knew no means

effectual without this, and therefore propounds the question, *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?* and he resolves it in the next words, *by taking heed thereto according to thy word*, Psal. cxix. 9. And how shall they compare their way and the word together, if not instructed? Our children are not born with bibles in their heads or hearts. And who ought to be the instructor, if not the parent? yea, who will do it with such natural affection?—As I have heard sometimes a mother say in other respects, Who can take such pains with my child, and be so careful as myself that am its mother? Bloody parents then they are, who acquaint not their children with God or his word; what do they but put them under a necessity of perishing, if God stir not up some to shew more mercy than themselves to them. Is it any wonder to hear that ship to be sunk, or dashed upon the rock, which was put to sea without a compass? no more is it, they should drown themselves in sin and perdition, that are thrust forth into the world (which is a sea of temptation) without the knowledge of God, or their duty to him. In the fear of God, think of it parents: your children have souls, and these God sets you to watch over; it will be a poor account at the last day, if you can only say, Lord, here are my children, I bred them complete Gentlemen, left them rich and wealthy. The rust of that silver you left them will witness your folly and sin, that you would do so much for that which rusts, and nothing for the enriching their minds with the knowledge of God, which would have endured for ever; happy if you had left them less money and more knowledge.

2. Consider, it hath ever been the Saint's practice to instruct and teach their children the way of God. David we find dropping instruction into his son *Solomon*, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. *Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind.* Though a King, he did not put it off to his Chaplains, but imparted it to him with his own lips. Neither was his Queen *Bathsheba* forgetful of her duty, her gracious counsel is upon record, Prov. xxxi. and that she may do it with more seriousness and solemnity, we find her stirring up her motherly bowels, to let her son see she fetched her words deep, even from her heart: *What my son, and what the son of my womb! and what the son of my vows!* ver. 2. Indeed, that counsel is most likely to go to the heart, which comes from thence. Parents know not what impression such melting expressions of their love, mingled

mingled with their instructions, leave on their children. God bids us *draw forth our souls to the hungry*; that is more than draw our purse, which may be done, and the heart hard and churlish. Thus we should draw forth our souls with our instructions; need I mention *Timothy's* mother and grandmother, who acquainted him with the Scripture from his youth? And truly, I think, that man calls in question his own saintship, that takes no care to acquaint his child with God, and the way that leads to him. I have known some, who though profane themselves, have been very solicitous their children should have good education; but never knew I a Saint that was regardless whether his child knew God or not.

3. It is an act of great unrighteousness not to instruct our children. We read of some *that hold the truth in unrighteousness*; among others, those parents that lock up the knowledge of these saving truths from their children, which God hath imparted to themselves. There is a double unrighteousness in it.

First, They are unrighteous to their children; who may lay as much claim to their care of instructing them, as to their labour and industry in laying up a temporal estate for them. If he do unrighteously with his child, that should not endeavour to provide for his outward maintenance, or having gathered an estate, lock it up, and deny his child necessaries, then much more he that lives in ignorance of God, whereby he renders himself incapable of providing for his child's soul, but most of all, he that having gathered a stock of knowledge, yet hides it from his child.

Secondly, They are unrighteous to God.

First, In that they keep that talent in their own hands which was given to be paid out to their children. When God revealed himself to *Abraham*, he had respect to *Abraham's* children; and therefore we find God promising himself this at *Abraham's* hands, upon which he imparts his mind to him concerning his purpose of destroying *Sodom*: *Shall I hide from Abraham* (saith God) *that thing which I do? I know that he will command his children, and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. xviii. 17, 19. The Church began at first in a family, and was preserved by the godly care of parents in instructing their children and household in the truths of God, whereby the knowledge

of God was transmitted from generation to generation ; and though now the Church is not confined to such strait limits, yet every private family is as a little nursery to the Church ; if the nursery be not carefully planted, the orchard will soon decay. O could you be willing, Christians, that your children, when you are laid in the dust, should be turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine, and prove a generation that do not know God ? Atheism needs not be planted ; you do enough to make your children such, if you do not endeavour to plant religion in their minds. The very neglect of the gardener to sow and dress his garden, gives advantage enough to the weeds to come up. This is the difference between Religion and Atheism. Religion doth not grow without planting, but will die even where it is planted without watering. Atheism, irreligion, and profaneness, are weeds, will grow without setting, but they will not die without plucking up ; all care and means little enough to stub them up. And therefore you that are parents, and do not teach your children, deal the more unrighteously with God, because you neglect the best season in their whole life, for planting in them the knowledge of God, and plucking up the contrary weeds of Atheism and irreligion. Young weeds come up with most ease, sinful ignorance in youth becomes wilful ignorance ; yea, impudence in age. You will not instruct them when young, and they will scorn their ministers when they are old.

Secondly, You deal unrighteously with God, that train not up your children in the knowledge of God, because your children, if you be Christian parents, are God's children ; they stand in a federal relation to him, which the children of others do not ; and shall God's children be nurtured with the Devil's education ? Ignorance is that with which he blinds the minds of the children of disobedience. Shall God's children have no better breeding ? The children of a Jew God made account were born to him, *thy sons and daughters, whom thou hast born to me*, Ezek. xvi. 20. God had by the covenant which he made with that people, married them unto himself ; and therefore, as the wife bears her children to her husband (they are his children) so God calls the children of the Jews his, and complains of it as horrible wickedness in them, that they should not bring them up as his, but offer them up to *Moloch ; they have slain my children*



*children* (saith God) ver. 21. And are not the children of a Christian his children as well as the Jews were? Hath God recalled or altered the first covenant, and cut off the entail? and darest thou slay not only thy children, but the Lord's also? and is not ignorance that bloody knife that doth it? *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*, Hos. iv. 6. Do you not tremble to offer them, not to *Moloch*, but the Devil, whom before you had given up to God, when you brought them to that solemn ordinance of Baptism, and there desired, before God and man, that they might become covenant-servants to the Lord? And hast thou bound them to him, and never teach them, either who their Lord and Master is, or what their duty is as his servants? Out of thy own mouth will God condemn thee.

Fourthly, Consider you, who are parents, that by not instructing your children, you entitle yourselves to all the sins they shall commit to their death. We may sin by a proxy, and make another's fact our own. *Thou hast* (saith God by *Nathan* to *David* concerning *Uriah*) *slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon*, 2 Sam. xii. 9. So thou mayest pierce Christ, and slay him over and over with the bloody sword of thy wicked children, if thou be not careful to train them up in the fear of God. There might be something said for that Heathen, who, when the scholar abused him, fell upon the master and struck him: indeed 'tis possible he might be in the most fault. When the child breaks the sabbath, it is his sin; but more the father's, if he never taught him what the command of God was. And if the parent be accessory to the sin of the child, it will be hard for him to escape a partnership, yea, a precedency in the punishment. O what a sad greeting will such have of their children at the great day! Will they not then accuse you to be the murderers of their precious souls, and lay their blood at your door, cursing you to your face, that taught them no better? But grant, that by the interposition of thy timely repentance, thou securest thy soul from the judgment of that day, yet God can scourge thee here for the neglect of thy duty to them. How oft do we see children become heavy crosses to such parents? It is just that they should not know their duty to thee, who didst not teach them their duty to God; or if thou shouldst not live so long as to see this, yet sure thou canst not but go in sorrow to thy grave,

to leave children behind thee that are on their way to hell. Some think, that *Lot's* lingering so long in *Sodom*, was his being loth to leave his sons in law behind him, to perish in the flames. No doubt (good man) it was very grievous to him, and this might make him stay pleading with them, till the Angel pulled him away. And certainly nothing makes holy parents more loth to be gone out of the reach of that fire that God will rain upon the heads of sinners. You know not how soon the messenger may come to pluck you hence, do your best while you are among them to win them home to God.

*Use 2.* To the Ministers of the Gospel. Let this stir up your bowels of compassion towards those many ignorant souls in your respective congregations, who know not the right hand from the left. This, this is the great destroyer of the country, which Ministers should come forth against with all their care and strength. More are swept to Hell with this plague of spiritual darkness than any other. Where the light of knowledge and conviction is, there commonly is a sense and pain that accompanies the sinner when he doth evil, which forceth some now and then to enquire for a Physician, and come in the distress of their spirits to their Minister or others for counsel, but ignorant souls feel no smart. If the Minister stay till he sends for him to instruct him, he may sooner hear the bell go for him, than any messenger come for him; you must seek them out, and not expect that they will come to you. These are a sort of people that are afraid more of their remedy than their disease, and study more to hide their ignorance, than how they may have it cured; which should make us pity them the more, because they pity themselves so little. I confess, it is no small unhappiness to some of us, who have to do with a multitude, that we have neither time nor strength to make our addresses to every particular person in our congregations, and attend on them as their needs require, and yet cannot well satisfy our consciences otherwise. But let us look to it, that though we cannot do to the height of what we would, we are not found wanting in what we may. Let not the difficulty of our province make us like some, who, when they see they have more work upon their hands than they can well dispatch, grow sick of it, and sit down out of a lazy despondency, and do just nothing. He that hath a  
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great house running to ruin, and but a small purse, 'tis better for him to repair now a little and then a little, then let all fall down, because he cannot do it all at once. Many Ministers may complain of their predecessors, that they left them their people more out of repair than their houses, and this makes the work great indeed. As the Jews, who were to revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish before they could build the wall, yet it went up, because *the people had a mind to work*, Neh. 4. O! if once our hearts were but filled with zeal for God, compassion to our peoples souls, we would up and be doing, though we could but lay a brick a day, and God would be with us. May be you who find a people rude and sottishly ignorant, like stones in the quarry, and trees unfelled, should not bring the work to such perfection in your days as you desire; yet, as *David* did for *Solomon*, thou mayst, by thy pains in teaching and instructing them, prepare materials for another who shall rear the temple. It is very ordinary for one Minister to enter into the labours of another, to reap those by a work of conversion, in whom a former Minister hath cast the seed of knowledge and conviction; and when God comes to reckon with his work-men, the plough-man and sower shall have his penny, as well as the harvest-man and reaper. O, it is a blessed thing to be (as *Job* saith he was) eyes to the blind, much more to blind souls; such are the Ministers. God himself calls *Pastors after his own heart, that feed his people with knowledge and understanding*, Jer. iii. 15. But woe to those that are accessory to their peoples ignorance. Now a Minister may be accessory to the ignorance of his people.

First, By his own ignorance. Knowledge is so fundamental to the work and calling of a Minister, that he cannot be one without it. *Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no Priest to me; seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God; I will also forget thy children*, Hos. iv. 6. The want of knowledge in a Minister is such a defect, as cannot be supplied by any thing else; be he never so meek, patient, bountiful, unblameable, if he hath not skill to divide the word aright, he is not cut out for a Minister. Every thing is good, as it is good for the end it is appointed to; a knife, though it had a haft of diamonds, yet if it will not cut, 'tis no knife. A bell,  
if

if no sound, is no bell. The great work of a Minister is to teach others, his lips are to preserve knowledge, he should be as conversant in the things of God, as others in their particular trades. Ministers are called lights; if the light then be darkness, how great is the darkness of that people like to be? I know these stars in Christ's hands are not all of the same magnitude; there is a greater glory of gift and graces shines in some than others; yet so much light is necessary to every Minister as was in the star the wise men saw at Christ's birth, to be able, out of the word, to direct sinners the true way to Christ and salvation. O, Sirs, it is a sad way of getting a living by killing of men, as some unskilful Physicians do; but much more to get a temporal livelihood by ruining souls through our ignorance. He is a cruel man to the poor passengers, who will undertake to be pilot, when he never so much as learnt his compass.

Secondly, By his negligence. It is all one if the nurse hath no milk in her breasts, or having, draws it not forth to her child. There is a woe to the *Idol-shepherd*, Zech. 11. such as have mouths, but speak not; lips, but not to feed the people with knowledge. It shall be the peoples sin, if they feed not when bread is before them, but woe to us, if we give them not meat in due season. O, Sirs, what shall we say to our Lord that trusts us, if those abilities which he hath given us, as market-money to buy bread for our people, be found wrapped up in a napkin of sloth? If that time, wherein we should have been teaching and instructing them, shall appear to be wasted in our pleasures, or employed about our carnal profits. That servant shall have but a sad welcome of his Master when he comes home, that shall be found out of the way with the key, and the family starving in the mean time for want of provision.

Thirdly, By his unedifying preaching, when he preacheth unsound doctrine, which doth not perfect the understanding, but corrupt it. Better he did leave them in simple ignorance, than colour their minds with a false dye, or when that he preacheth is frothy and flashy, no more fit to feed their souls, than husks the Prodigal's belly, which when they know they are little the wiser for their souls good. Or when his discourses are so high flown, that the poor people stand gazing, as those who have lost the sight of their Preacher, and at the end of the sermon cannot tell what he meant. Or those  
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who preach only truths, that are for the higher forms of Professors, who have their senses well exercised, excellent may be for the building up three or four eminent Saints in the congregation; but in the mean time, the weak ones in the family, (who should indeed chiefly be thought on, because least able to guide themselves, or carve for themselves) these are forgotten. He sure is an unwise builder, that makes a scaffold as high as *Paul's* steeple, when his work is at the bottom, and he is to lay the foundation, whereas the scaffold should rise as the building goes up. So *Paul* advanceth in his doctrine, as his hearers in knowledge, *Heb. vi. 1. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection. Let us.* It is well indeed when the people can keep pace with the Preacher. To preach truths and notions above the hearers capacity, is like a nurse, that should go to feed a child with a spoon too big to go into its mouth. We may by such preaching please ourselves, some of higher attainments, but what shall poor ignorant ones do in the mean time? He is the faithful steward that considers both. The Preacher is (as *Paul* saith of himself) *a debtor both to the Greek and to the Barbarian, to the wise and to the unwise, Rom. i. 14.* to prepare truths suitable to the degree of his hearers. Let the wise have their portion, but let them be patient to see the weak in the family served also.

Fourthly, A Minister may be accessory to the ignorance of his people, when through the scandal of his life he judiceth his doctrine, as a cook, who, by his filthiness, makes others afraid to eat what comes out of his fingers; or when, through his supercilious carriage, his poor people dare not come to him. He that will do any good in the minister's calling, must be as careful as the fisher that he doth nothing to scare souls away from him, but all to allure and invite, that they may be towed within the compass of his net.

*Use 3.* Is the ignorant soul such a slave to Satan? Let this stir you up that are ignorant, from your seats of sloth, whereon, like the blind Egyptians, you sit in darkness; speedily come out of this darkness, and resolve not to go down to utter darkness. The covering of *Haman's* face did tell him, that he should not stay in the King's presence. If thou livest in ignorance, it shews thou art in God's black bill; he puts this cover before their eyes in wrath, whom he  
means

means to turn off into hell, 2 Cor. iv. *If our Gospel be hid, it is to those that perish.* In one place sinners are threatened, *they shall die without knowledge,* Job xxxvi. In another place, *they shall die in their sins,* John viii. He indeed that dies without knowledge, dies in his sins: and what more fearful doom can the great God pass upon a creature than this? Better die in a prison, die in a ditch, than die in our sins. If thou die in thy sins, thou shalt rise in thy sins: as thou fallest asleep in the dust, so thou awakest in the morning of the resurrection; if an ignorant Christless wretch, as such thou shalt be arraigned and judged. That God whom now sinners bid depart from them, will then be worth their acquaintance (themselves being judges;) but alas! then he will throw their own words in their teeth, and bid them depart from him, he desires not the knowledge of them. O sinners, you shall see at last, God can better be without your company in heaven, than you could without his knowledge on earth: yet, yet 'tis day, draw your curtains, and behold Christ shining upon your face with Gospel-light; hear wisdom crying in the streets, and Christ piping under your window in the voice of his spirit and messengers, *How long will ye simple ones love simplicity, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, and make known my words unto you,* Prov. i. 21, 22, 23. What can you say (sinners) for your sottish ignorance? Where is your cloak for this sin? The time hath been when the word of the Lord was precious, and there was no open vision, not a bible to be found in a town or country; when the tree of knowledge was forbidden fruit, and none might taste thereof without licence from the Pope; happy he that could get a leaf or two of the testament into a corner, afraid to tell the wife of his bosom. O how sweet were these waters, when they were forced to steal them? But you have the word, or may in your houses; you have those that open them every sabbath in their assemblies, many of you at least the offers of your ministers to take any pains with you in private, passionately beseeching you to pity your souls, and receive instruction: yea 'tis the lamentation they generally take up, you will not come unto them that you may receive light. How long may a poor minister sit in his study, before any of the ignorant will come upon such an errand? Lawyers have their clients, and Physicians their patients: these are sought

sought after, and called up at midnight for counsel: but alas! the soul, which is of more value than raiment and body too, is neglected, and the minister seldom thought on, till both these are sent away. Perhaps when the physician gives them over for dead, we must come and close up those eyes with comfort, which were never opened to see Christ in his truth; or be counted cruel, because we will not sprinkle them with holy water, and anoint them for the kingdom of heaven, though they know not a step of the way that leads to it. Ah, poor wretches! what comfort would you have us speak to those, to whom God himself speaks terror! Is heaven ours to give to whom we please? or is it in our power to alter the laws of the Most High, and save those whom he condemns? do you not remember the curse that is to fall upon his head, *that maketh the blind to wander out of the way?* Deut. xxvii. 18. What curse then would be our portion, if we should confirm such blind souls, that are quite out of the way to heaven, encouraging you to go on and expect to reach heaven at last, when God knows your feet stand in those paths that lead to eternal death? No, 'tis written, we cannot, and God will not reverse it; you may read your very names among those damned souls which Christ comes in flaming fire to take vengeance on, who the Apostle tells us are such, *that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,* 2 Thes. i. 8. And therefore in the fear of God, let this provoke you, of what age or sex, rank or condition soever in the world, to labour for the saving knowledge of God in Christ, *whom to know is life eternal.* *Are ye young?* Enquire after God betimes, while your parts are fresh, and memory strong, before the throng of worldly cares divert you, or lusts of youth debauch you. The feet of those lusts which have buried millions of others in perdition, stand ready to carry you the same way, if preventing grace come not, and deliver you out of their hands, by seasoning your minds with the knowledge of God. This morning's draught may prevent thy being infected with the ill favours thou mayest receive from the corrupt examples of others. Nay, how long thy stay may be in the world thou knowest not, see whether thou canst not find graves of thy length in the burial place, and if thou shouldst die ignorant of God and his law, what would then become of thee? The small brush, and the old logs, young sinners,

and those that are withered with age, meet and burn together. Or if thou shouldest stay a while longer here, may be, because thou wilt not learn now, God will not teach thee then: or if thou shouldest in thy old age get acquaintance with God, yet 'tis said to be sowing thy seed, when thou shouldest be reaping thy sheaves, learning to know God, when thou mightest be comforting thyself from the old acquaintance thou hast enjoyed with him. *Are you old and ignorant?* Alas, poor creature! your life in the socket, and this candle of the Lord not set up and lighted in your understanding? your body bowing to the dust, and nature tolling the passing bell, as it were, and you, (like one going in the dark) know not whither death will lead you or leave you. 'Tis like, the infirmities of age make you wish your bones were even laid at rest in the grave: but if you should die in this condition, your poor souls would even wish they were here again with their old burthens on their backs; aches and diseases of old age are grievous, but damned souls would thank God, if he would bless them with such a heaven, as to lie in these pains, to escape the torments of the other: O be-think you before you go hence; the less time you have, the more diligence you must use to gain knowledge; we need not be earnest, (one would think) to bid the poor prisoner learn his book, that cannot read, when he knows he shall be hanged if he read not his neck-verse. 'Tis not indeed the bare knowing the truths of the gospel, saves; but the gross ignorance of them to be sure will damn souls. *Are you poor?* It is not your poverty is your sin or misery. Were you God's poor, rich in knowledge and faith, you were happy, *Eccles. iv. 13. Better is a poor and wise child, than an old and foolish King, who will no more be admonished;* yea, so happy, that did the Princes of the world understand themselves aright, they would wish themselves in our clothes, how ragged soever they are, rather than be in their own robes; there are better for you in heaven, which you shall put on, when their's shall be pulled off to their shame. It will not then trouble you that you were, while in the world, poor; but it will torment them that they were so rich and great, and so poor to God, and beggarly in their souls.

*Are you rich?* Labour for the knowledge of the Most High. *Solomon* had more of the world's treasure than a thousand of you have, and yet we find him hard at prayer,  
tugging



tugging with God for knowledge, 2 *Chr.* i. 10. I am afraid many men think themselves privileged by their worldly greatness from this duty, as if God were bound to save them, because rich. Alas, Sirs, there are not so many of you like to come there. I must confess it would make one tremble to think what a small number those among the great ones that shall be saved, are summed up into. *Not many great, not many rich*; Why so few saved? Because so few have saving knowledge. O the Atheism, the ignorance, the sottish barbarism that is to be found even in those that the world applaud, and even worship, because of their lands and estates, who yet are not able to give any account of their faith? A poor leather-coat Christian will shame and catechize a hundred of them. If heaven were to be purchased with house and lands, then these would carry it away from the poor disciples of Jesus Christ; they have their hundreds and thousands lie by them for a purchase always, but this money is not current in heaven's exchange. *This is life eternal, to know thee, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

*Quest.* But how may an ignorant soul attain to knowledge?

*Ans.* First, be deeply affected with thy ignorance. Some are blind, as *Laodicea*, and know it not, *Rev.* iii. 17. As ignorance blinds the mind, so pride is a blind before their ignorance, that they know it not. These have such a high opinion of themselves, that they take it ill any should suspect them; these of all men are most out of the way to knowledge, they are too good to learn of man, and too bad to be taught of God. The gate into Christ's school is low, and these cannot stoop: the master himself is so humble and lowly, that he will not teach a proud scholar. Therefore first become a fool in thy own eye. A wiser man than thyself hath confessed as much, *Prov.* xxx. 2, 3. *I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man, I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.* When thou art come to thyself to own and blush at the brutish ignorance of thy mind, thou art fit to be admitted into Christ's school. *If they be ashamed, then shew them the pattern of the house,* *Ezek.* xliii. 10.

Secondly, Be faithful with that little knowledge thou hast. Art thou convinced this is a sin, and that is a duty? Follow the light close, you know not what this little may grow to;

we use to set up our children with a little stock at first, and as they use it, so we add. The kingdom of God comes of small beginnings. God complains of *Israel*, they were *brutish in their knowledge*, Jer. x. 14. He doth not say brutish in their ignorance; had they sinned because they did not know better, this would have excused *a tanto*, but they did that which was brutish and unreasonable, as their worshipping graven images, notwithstanding they knew to the contrary. That man shall not excel in knowledge who prostitutes it to sin, *Job xxxvi. 12. If they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and shall die without knowledge.* A candle pent up close in a dark lanthorn, swails out apace: and so doth light shut up in the conscience, and not suffered to come forth in the conversation. Those Heathens that are charged for *holding the truth in unrighteousness*, Rom. i. 18. the next news you hear of them is, that *they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened*, ver. 21.

Thirdly, Ply tae throne of grace. He is the best student in divinity, that studies most upon his knees. Knowledge is a divine gift; all light is from heaven. God is the father of light, and prayer puts the soul under the tuition of God. *If any one lack wisdom, let him ask it of God.* This is more than naked knowledge, wisdom how to use it. Study may make one a great scholar in the scriptures, but prayer makes a wise Christian, as it obtains sanctified knowledge, without which it is no perfect gift, but a gift and no gift. Pray then with an humble boldness. God gives it to all that ask, and that candidly, liberally; not like proud man, who will rather put one to shame who is weak, for his ignorance, than take the pains to teach him. Thy petition is very pleasing to God. Remember how *Solomon* sped upon the like occasion, and promise thyself the same success. Christ's school is a free school; he denies none that come to him, so they will submit to the orders of the school; and though all have not an answer in the same degree of knowledge (it is not needful that all should be *Solomons* in knowledge, except all were to be *Solomons* in place,) yet the meanest disciple that Christ sends forth shall be furnished with saving knowledge, enough to fit him for his admittance into heaven's academy. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and after bring me to glory.*

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Thou must bestow some time for thy diligent search after truth. Truth lies deep, and must be digged for. Since man was turned out of Paradise, he can do nothing without labour, except sin (this follows his hand indeed) but this treasure of knowledge calls for spade and mattock. We are bid *search the Scriptures*, and *Dan. xii. 4. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*; a metaphor from merchants, who bestir themselves to get an estate, run to and fro, first in one land, then in another, wherever they hear of any thing to be got, thither they post, though to the ends of the earth; thus must the soul run from one duty to another, one while read, and anon meditate of what he hath read, then pray over his meditations, and ask counsel after all. What is the meaning of this, and how understand you that? There is more light got sometimes by a short conference with a preacher, than by his whole sermon. Be sure thou compass all the means for knowledge within the walk of thy endeavour. In this thy search for knowledge observe three things.

First, The end thou proposest, that it be pure and holy, not merely to know, as some do, who labour for knowledge, as many for estates, and when they have got it, look on their notions, as they on their bags of money, but have no heart to use their knowledge for their own or others good; this is a sore evil. Speculative knowledge, like *Rachel*, is fair, but barren. To be known and admired by others for thy stature in knowledge above thy brethren, verily it is too base an end to aim at in seeking knowledge, especially such as is the knowledge of God and Christ. To see a Heathen study for knowledge in Philosophy, and then carry all his labour to this market, and think himself rewarded with obtaining the name of a wise man, is, though base, yet more tolerable: but for one that knows God, and what it is to enjoy him; for such an one to content himself with a blast or two of sorry man's vain breath, this is folly with a witness: look thou fly higher than so. Labour for knowledge that thou mayest fear God whom thou knowest; thus *David*, *Psal. cxix. 33. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.* The word of God is called a light unto our feet, not to our tongues merely to talk of, but feet to walk by: endeavour for it, not that thou mayest spread thy own name, but celebrate God. As *David* promiseth,

promiseth, when he understands the precepts of God, then he will talk of his wondrous work, he will trumpet the fame of them, and thereby awaken others to enquire after God.

Secondly, When thy end is right, be constant in thy endeavour after it. The mysteries of Christ are not learned in a day. *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord,* Hos. vi. 3. Some are in a good mood, and they will look into the bible, and read a chapter or two, and away they go for a week, and never practise it more; like some young boys if at school one day, truant all the week after: is it any wonder such thrive not in knowledge? The study of the word, and the reading of it, differs as much, as the friendship of such who every day converse lovingly together, doth from the acquaintance one hath with a stranger at an inn, or whom he salutes as he passeth by in the streets. If you will get knowledge indeed, you must not only salute the word now and then, but walk with it, and enter into daily converse with it. The three men (who were indeed angels) that stood by *Abraham*, as he sat at his tent-door, were reserved and strange, till *Abraham* invited them into his tent, and entertained them friendly; and then Christ, who was one among them (as appears by the name *Jehovah* given him in several verses, and also by what he promised he would do for *Sarah*, ver. 10. not what God would do, which if a created angel he would) begins to discover himself to *Abraham*, and reveal his secrets to him. That soul above others shall be acquainted with the secrets of God in his word, that doth not slightly read the word, and as it were compliment with it at his tent door, but desires more intimacy with it, and therefore entertains it within his soul by frequent meditating of it. *David* compares the word for sweetness to *the honey and the honey-comb*. Indeed it is so full, that at first reading some sweetness will now and then drop from it, but he that doth not press it by meditation, leaves the most behind.

Thirdly, Be sure thou takest the right order and method. Arts and sciences have their rudiments, and also their more abstruse and deep notions; and sure the right end to begin at, is first to learn the principles: he (we say) is not likely to make a good scholar in the University, that never was a good one at the Grammar-school. And they cannot be solid Christi-  
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ans, that are not instructed in the grounds of christianity. The want of this is the cause why many are so unstedfast; first of this way, and then of that, blown like glasses into any shape, as false teachers please to breathe. Alas, they have no center to draw their lines from. Think it no disgrace, you who have run into error, and lost yourselves in the labyrinths of deep points (which now are the great discourse of the weakest professors) to be set back to learn the first principles of the oracles of God better; too many are, as *Tertullian* saith in another case, more tender of their reputation than their salvation, who are more ashamed to be thought ignorant, than careful to have it cured.

Fourthly, If thou wouldest attain to divine knowledge, wait on the ministry of the word. As for those who neglect this, and come not where the word is preached, they do as one that should turn his back on the sun, that he may see it; if thou would know God, come where he hath appointed thee to learn. Indeed, where the means are not, God hath extraordinary ways; as a Father, if no school in town, will teach his child at home; but if there be a public-school, thither he sends him. *God maketh manifest* (saith *Paul*) *the savour of his knowledge by us in every place*, 2 Cor. ii. 14. Let men talk of the Spirit what they please: he will at last be found a quencher of the Spirit, that is a despiser of prophecy, they both stand together, 1 Thes. v. 19, 20. *Quench not the Spirit, Despise not prophesying*. But it is not enough to sit under the means; woeful experience teacheth this, there are some no sun will tan, they keep their own complexion under the most shining and burning light of the word preached, as ignorant and profane as those that never saw gospel-day; therefore if thou wilt receive any spiritual advantage by the word, take heed how thou hearest.

First, Look thou art a wakeful hearer. Is it any wonder he should go away from the sermon no wiser than he came, that sleeps the greatest part of it away, or hears between sleeping and waking? It must be in a dream sure, if God reveal any thing of his mind to him. So indeed God did to the fathers of old; but it was not as they profanely slept under an ordinance. O take heed of such irreverence. He that composeth himself to sleep (as some do) at such a time, or he that is not humbled for it, and that deeply, both

of them betray a base and low esteem of the ordinance. Surely thou thinkest but meanly of what is delivered, if it will not keep thee awake; yea, of God himself, whose message it is. See how thou art reproved by the awful carriage of a Heathen, and that a King; *Ehud* did but say to *Eglon*, *I have a message from God unto thee, and he arose out of his seat*, Judg. iii. 20. And thou sittest down on thy seat to sleep: O how dardest thou put such an affront upon the great God? How oft did you fall asleep at dinner, or whilst telling your money? And is not the word of God worth more than all these? I should wonder if such sermon sleepers dream of any thing but hell-fire. 'Tis dangerous you know to fall asleep with a candle burning by our side; some have been so burnt in their beds: But more dangerous to sleep while the candle of the word is shining so near us. What if you should sink down dead like *Eutychus*? here is no *Paul* to raise you as he had; and that you shall not, where is your security?

Secondly, Be thou an attentive hearer. He that is awake, but wanders with his eye or heart, what doth he but sleep with his eyes open? It were as good the servant should be asleep in his bed, as when up not to mind his master's business. When God intends a soul good by the word, he draws such an one to listen and hearken heedfully to what is delivered; as we see in *Lydia*, who ('tis said) *attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul*. And those, Luke xix. 48. *The people were attentive to hear him*. They did hang on him as you see bees on some sweet flower, or as young birds on the bills of their dams as they feed them; that is the soul which shall get light and life by the word. *Hear ye children, and attend to know understanding*, Prov. iv. 1. Labour therefore in hearing the word to fix thy quick-silver mind; set thyself to hear, as 'tis said *Jehosaphat* did to pray, and that thou mayest before thou goest have in thy heart some deep sense of thy spiritual wants, especially of thy ignorance of the things of God, and thy deplorable condition by reason of it; till the heart be touched, the mind will not be fixed. Therefore you may observe, 'tis said, *God opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended*, Acts xvi. 14. The mind goes of the will's errand; we spend our thoughts upon what our hearts propose. If the heart hath no sense of its ignorance, or no desires after God, no wonder such an one listens not to what the preacher

preacher saith, his heart sends his mind another way. *They sit before thee as my people* (saith God) *but their heart goeth after their covetousness*: They come not out of such an intent or desire to hear for any good to their souls, then they would apply themselves wholly to the work; no it is their covetousness hath their hearts, and therefore as some idle servant, when he hath waited on his master, brought him to his pew, then he goes out to his good fellows at the ale-house, and comes no more till sermon be almost done; so do the thoughts of most when they go to the ordinance, they slip out in the street, market, or shop, you may find them any where but about the duty before them, and all because these have their hearts more than God and his word.

Thirdly, Be thou a retentive hearer; without this the work would ever be to begin again. Truths to a forgetful hearer are as a seal set on water, the impression lasts no longer than the seal is on; the sermon once done, and all is undone; be therefore very careful to fasten what thou hearest on thy memory, which that thou mayest do,

First, Receive the truth in the love of it. An affectionate hearer will not be a forgetful hearer. Love helps the memory. *Can a woman forget her child, or a maid her ornaments, or a bride her attire?* No, they love them too well: were the truths of God thus precious to thee, thou wouldest with *David* think of them day and night. Even when the Christian through weakness of memory cannot remember the very words he hears, to repeat them; yet he keeps the power and savour of them in his spirit; as when sugar is dissolved in wine, you cannot see it, but you may taste it; when meat is eaten and digested, it is not to be found as it was received, but this man is cheared and strengthened by it, more able to walk and work than before, by which you may know it is not lost: so you may taste the truths the Christian heard, in his spirit, see them in his life. Perhaps if you ask him what the particulars were the Minister had about faith, mortification, repentance, and the like, he cannot tell you; yet this you may find, his heart is more broken for sin, more enabled to rely on the promises, and now weaned from the world. As a good woman answered one, who asked her what she remembered of the sermon? said, she could not at present

recal much, but she heard that which should make her reform some things as soon as she came home.

Secondly, Meditate on what thou hearest; by this *David* got more wisdom than his teachers. Observe what truth, what scripture is cleared to thee in the sermon more than before, take some time in secret to converse with it, and make it thereby familiar to thy understanding. Meditation to the sermon, is what the harrow is to the seed, it covers those truths which else might have been picked up or washed away. I am afraid there are many proofs turned down at a sermon, that are hardly turned up, and looked on any more when the sermon is done; and if so, you make others believe you are greater traders for your souls than you are indeed; as if one should come to a shop and lay by a great deal of rich ware, and when he hath done, goes away and never calls for it.— O take heed of such doings. The hypocrite cheats himself worst at last.

Thirdly, Discharge thy memory of what is sinful. We wipe our table-book, and deface what is there scribbled, before we can write new. There is such a contrariety betwixt the truths of God and all that is frothy and sinful, that one puts out the other; if you would retain the one, you must let the other go.

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## CHAP. VI.

*Of the Spirituality of the Devils nature, and their extreme Wickedness.*

*Against spiritual Wickedness.*

THESE words are the fourth branch in the description, *Spiritual Wickedness*; and our contest or combat with them as such, expressed by the adversitive particle [*Against*] in  
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the Greek, *pros ta pneumatika tes ponerias*, word for word; *Against the spirituals of wickedness*, which is, as say some, *against wicked spirits*: that is true, but not all. I conceive, with many interpreters, not only the spiritual nature of the Devil and the wickedness thereof to be intended, but also, yea, chiefly, the nature and kind of those sins, which these wicked spirits do most usually and vigorously provoke the Saints unto, and they are the spirituals of wickedness, not those gross fleshly sins, which the herd of beastly sinners (like swine) wallow in, but sin spiritualized, and this, because it is not *pneumata*, but *pneumatica*, not spirits, but spirituals. The words present us with these three doctrinal conclusions.

First, The Devils are spirits.

Secondly, The Devils are spirits extremely wicked.

Thirdly, These wicked spirits do chiefly annoy the Saints with, and provoke them to spiritual wickednesses.

## SECT. I.

First, They are spirits. Spirit is a word of various acceptance in scripture. It is used often to set forth the essence and nature of angels, good and evil, both which are called spirits. The holy angels, Heb. i. 14. *Are they not all ministering spirits?* The evil, *There came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him*, 1 Kings xxii. 21. that spirit was a Devil. How oft is the Devil called an unclean spirit, foul spirit, lying spirit, &c. Sin did not alter their substance, for then, as one well saith, that nature and substance which transgressed could not be punished.

First, The Devil is a spirit, that is, his essence is immaterial and simple, not compounded of matter and form: *Handle and see me* (saith Christ to his disciples that thought they had seen a spirit) *a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have*, Luke xxiv. 39. If they were not thus immaterial, how could they enter into bodies and possess them, as the scripture tells us they have, even a legion into one man? Luke viii. 20. One body cannot thus enter into another.

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Secondly,

Secondly, The Devils are spiritual substances, not qualities, or evil motions arising from us, as some have absurdly conceived. So the Sadducees, and others following them, deny any such being as angel, good or evil; but this is such a conceit, that we must forfeit our reason, and deny the scriptures to maintain it, where we find their creation related, Col. i. 18. the fall of some from their first estate, Jude 6. and the standing of others, called the Elect Angels: The happiness of the one, who behold God's face; and their employment, are sent out to attend on the Saints, as servants on their master's heirs, Heb. i. The misery of the other, reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day; and their present work, which is to do mischief to the souls and bodies of men, as far as they are permitted; all which shew their subsistence. But so immersed is sorry man in flesh, that he will not easily believe what he sees not with his fleshly eyes; upon the same account we may deny the being of God himself, because invisible.

Thirdly, They are entire spiritual substances, which have every one proper existence: and thus they are distinguished from the souls of men, which are made to subsist in a human body; and together with it to make one perfect man, so that though the soul when separated from the body doth exist, yet hath a tendency to union with its body again.

Fourthly, They are, though entire spiritual substances; yet finite, being but creatures. God only is the uncreated, infinite and absolutely simple spirit; yea, father of all other spirits.

Now from this spiritual nature of the Devil, we may further see what a dreadful enemy we have to grapple with.

First, As spirits are of vast intellectual abilities. Sorry man, while in this dark prison of the body, hath not light enough to know what angelical perfections are; that they excel in knowledge all other creatures we know, because as spirits they come nearest by creation to the nature of God that made them; the heavens are not lifted higher from the earth, than angels by knowledge from man, while on earth. Man by art hath learnt to take the height of the stars of heaven, but where is he that can tell how far in knowledge angels exceed man? 'Tis true they have lost much of that  
knowledge

knowledge they had, even all their knowledge as holy angels, what now they know of God hath lost its savour, and they have no power to use it for their own good. What *Jude* saith of wicked men, may be said of them, *What they know naturally, in these things they corrupt themselves.* They know the holiness of God, but love him not for it, as the elect angels do, and themselves by creation did. They know the evil of sin, and love it not the less; but though they are such fools for themselves, yet would be too much for all the Saints on earth, if we had not a God to play our game for us.

Secondly, As spirits they are invisible, and their approaches also. They come, and you see not your enemy. Indeed this makes him so little feared by the ignorant world, whereas it is his greatest advantage if rightly weighed. O if men have an apparition of the Devil, or hear a noise in the night, they cry, The Devil, the Devil, and are ready to run out of their wits for fear; but they carry him in their hearts, and walk all the day long in his company, and fear him not. When thy proud heart is clambering up to the pinnacle of honour in thy ambitious thoughts, who sets thee there but the Devil? When thy adulterous heart is big with all manner of uncleanness and filthiness, who but Satan hath been there, begetting these brats on thy wanton spirit? When thou art raging in thy passion, throwing burning coals of wrath and fury about with thy inflamed tongue, where was it set on fire but of hell? When thou art hurried like the swine down the precipice, and even choaked in thy own drunken vomit, who but the Devil rides thee?

Thirdly, As spirits they are immortal. Of other enemies you may hear news at last that they are dead which sought thy life, as the angel told *Joseph* of *Herod*. Persecuting men walk a turn or two upon the stage, and are called off by death, and there is an end of all their plots; but Devils die not, they will hunt thee to thy grave, and when thou diest they will meet thee in another world, to accuse and torment thee.

Fourthly, They are unwearied in their motions. When the fight is over among men, the conqueror must sit down and breathe, and so loseth the chase, because not able to pursue it in time. Yea, some have given over their empires, as glutted with the blood of men, and weary of the work, when they cannot have their will as they desired. Thus

*Dioclesian*

*Dioclesian*, because he saw he did but mow a meadow that grew the thicker for cutting down (as *Tertullian* speaks of the Christians martyred) he throws away his sceptre in a pet. Charles the Fifth did the like (some say) upon the same reason, because he could not root out the *Lutherans*. But the Devil's spirit is never cowed, nor is he weary of doing mischief, tho' he hath never stood still since first he began his walk to and fro in the world. O what would become of us if God were not at our back, who is infinitely more the Devil's odds than he'ours.

## SECT. II.

Secondly, They are wicked spirits; wicked in the abstract, as in the text, and called by way of eminency in sin, *The wicked one*, Matt. xiii. 19. As God is called the holy one, because *none so holy as the Lord*. So, the Devil the wicked one, because he is a nonesuch in sin. In a few particulars let us endeavour to take the height of the Devil's sin, and the rather, that we may judge of the degrees of sins, and sinners among the sons of men: the nearer God in holiness, the more holy; the liker the Devil, the more wicked.

First, These apostate angels are the inventers of sin; the first that sounded the trumpet of rebellion against their maker, and led the dance to all that sin which since hath filled the world. Now what tongue can accent this sin to its full? For such a noble creature whom God hath set on the top, as it were, of all the creation, nearest to himself, from whom God hath kept nothing but his own royal Diadem; for this peer and favourite of the court, without any cause or solicitation from any other, to make this bold and blasphemous attempt to snatch at God's own crown, this paints the Devil blacker than the thoughts of men and angels can conceive. He is called *the Father of lies*, as those who have found out any art, are called the father of it. *Jubal the father of all such as handle the harp and organ*; he invented musick. And this is a dreadful aggravation, because they sinned without a tempter. And though man is not in such a degree capable of this aggravation, yet some men sin after the very similitude of the Devil's transgression in this respect, who as  
*Paul*

*Paul* stiles them, *are inventors of evil things*, Rom. i. 30. Indeed sin is an old trade, found out to our hand; but as in other trades and arts, some famous men arise, who add to the invention of others; so there are ever some infamous in their generation, that make old sins new, by superadding, to the wickedness of others. Uncleanness is an old sin from the beginning, but the *Sodomites* will be filthy in a new way; and therefore it carries their name to this day. Some invent new errors, others new oaths, such as are of their own coining, hot out of the mint, they scorn to swear after the old fashion. Others new devices of persecuting, as *Julian* had a way by himself different from all before him; and to the end of the world every age will exceed the former in the degrees of sinning. *Ishmael* and the mockers of the old world, were but children and bunglers to the scoffers and cruel mockers of the last time. Well, take heed of shewing thy wit in inventing new sins, lest thou stir up God to new punishments. *Is not destruction to the wicked, and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?* Job xxxi. 3. *Sodom* sinned after a new mode, and God destroys them after a new way, sends hell from above upon them. Some have invented new opinions, monstrous errors, and God hath suited their monstrous errors with births as monstrous of their own body.

Secondly, They were not only the inventors of sin, but are still the chief tempters to and promoters of sin which is called *the work of the Devil*, whoever commits it; as the house goes by the name of the master-workman, though he useth his servant's hands to build it. O take heed of soliciting others to sin; thou takest the Devil's office (as I may say) out of his hand; let him do it himself if he will, make not thyself so like him. To tempt another, is worse than to sin thyself. It speaketh sin to be of great growth in that man that doth it knowingly and willingly. Herbs and flowers shed not their seed till ripe, creatures propagate not till of stature and age. What do those that tempt others, but diffuse their wicked opinions and practises, and as it were, raise up seed to the Devil, thereby to keep up the name of their infernal father in the world? this shews sin is mighty in them indeed. Many a man, though so cruel to his own soul as to be drunk or swear, yet will not like this in a child or servant; what are they then but Devils incarnate, who teach their children

children the Devil's catechism, to swear and lie, drink and drab? If you meet such, be not afraid to call them (as *Paul* did *Elymas*) children of the Devil, full of subtilty and mischief, and enemies of righteousness. Do you not know what you do, when you tempt? I will then tell you, you do that which you cannot undo by your own repentance; thou poisonest one with error, initiatest another into the Devil's school, but afterwards perhaps, thou seest thy mistake, and recantest thy error, art thou sure now to rectify and convert them with thyself? Alas, poor creatures! this is out of thy power, they, may be, will say, as one that was solicited to turn back to Popery by him who had before persuaded him to renounce the same; *You have given me one turn, but shall not give me another.* And what a grief to thy spirit will it be, to see these going to Hell on thy errand, and thou not able to call them back? thou mayest cry out as *Lamech*, *I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.* Nay, when thou art asleep in thy grave, he whom thou seducedst may have drawn in others, and thy name may be quoted to commend the opinion and practice to others; by which thou mayest, though dead, sin in those that are alive, generation after generation. A little spark kindled by the error of one, hath cost the pains of many ages to quench it; and when thought to be out, hath broke forth again.

Thirdly, They are not barely wicked but maliciously wicked. The Devil's name denoteth his spiteful nature, his desire to vex and trouble others. When he draws souls to sin, it is not because he tastes any sweetness, or finds any profit therein; he hath too much light to have any joy in sin; he knows his doom, and trembles at the thought of it, and yet his spiteful nature makes him vehemently desire, and incessantly endeavour the damnation of souls. As you shall see a mad dog run after a flock of sheep, kill one, then another, and when dead, not able to eat their flesh, kills to kill: So Satan is carried out with a boundless rage against man, especially the Saints; he would not leave one of Christ's flock alive; such is the height of his malice against God, whom he hates with a perfect hatred, and because he cannot reach him with a direct blow, he strikes him at second-hand through his Saints: that wicked arm which reacheth not to God is extended against these excellent on  
the

the earth, well knowing the life of God is in a manner bound up in theirs. God cannot out-live his honour, and his honour speeds as his mercy is exalted or depressed; this being the attribute God means to honour in their salvation so highly, and therefore maligned above the rest by Satan. And this is the worst that can be said of these wicked spirits, that they maliciously spite God, and in God the glory of his mercy.

*Use 1.* This may help us to conceive more fully what the desperate wickedness of man's nature is, which is so hard to be known, because it can never be seen at once, it being a fountain whose immensity consists not in the stream of actual sin, (that is visible, and may seem little but in the spring that incessantly feeds this; but here is a glass that will give us the shape of our hearts truly like themselves. Seest thou the monstrous pitch and height of wickedness that is in the Devil; all this there is in the heart of every man; there is no less wickedness potentially in the tamest sinner on earth, than in the Devils themselves, and that one day thou, whoever thou art, wilt shew to purpose, if God prevents thee not by his renewing grace; thou art not yet fledged, thy wings are not grown to make thee a flying dragon, but thou art of the same brood, the seed of this serpent is in thee, and the Devil begets a child like himself; thou yet standest in a soil not so proper for ripening of sin, which will not come to its fulness till transplanted into hell. Thou who art here so modest, as to blush at some sins out of shame, and forbear the acting of others out of fear, when there thou shalt see thy case as desperate as the Devil doth his, then thou wilt spit out thy blasphemies, with which thy nature was stuffed, with the same malice that he doth. The *Indians* have a conceit, that when they die, they shall be transformed into the deformed likeness of the Devil, therefore in their language they have the same word for a dead man and the Devil; sin makes the wicked like him before they comethere, but indeed they will come to their countenance more fully there, when those flames shall wash off that paint which here hides their complexion.

The Saints in heaven shall be like the angels in their alacrity, love and constancy to serve God, and the damned like the Devils in sin as well as punishment. This one consideration might be of excellent use to unbottom a sinner, and abase him, so as never to have high thoughts of him-

self. It is easy to run down a person whose life is wicked, and convince him of the evil of his actions, and make him confess what he doth is evil; but here is the thicket we lose him in; he will say, 'tis true, I am overseen, I do what I should not, God forgive me; but my heart is good. Thy heart good, sinner! and so is the Devil's; his nature is wicked, and thine as bad as his. These pimples in thy face shew the heat of thy corrupt nature within, and without Gospel-physic, the blood of Christ applied to thee, thou wilt die a leper; none but Christ can give thee a new heart, till which, thou wilt every day grow worse and worse. Sin is an hereditary disease, that increaseth with age. A young sinner will be an old Devil.

*Use 2.* It would be of use to the Saints, especially those in whom God by his timely call fore-stalled the Devil's market; as sometimes the spirit of God takes sin in its quarters before it comes into the field, in the sins of youth; now such an one finding not those daring sins committed by him, that others have been left unto, may possibly not be affected so with his own sin, or God's mercy. O let him behold here the wickedness of his heart, in the glass of the Devil's nature, and he will see himself as great a debtor to the mercy of God as *Manasses*, or the worst of sinners, as in pardoning, so in preventing the same cursed nature with theirs, before it gave fire on God with those bloody sins they committed. That thou didst not act such outrageous sins, thou art beholden to God's gracious surprize, and not the goodness of thy nature which hath the Devil's stamp on it, for which God might have crushed thee, as we do the brood of serpents before they sting, knowing what they will do in time. Who will say that *Faux* suffered unjustly, because the Parliament was not blown up? it was enough that the materials for that massacre were provided, and he taken there with match and fire about him ready to lay the train; and canst thou say, when God first took hold on thee, that thou hadst not those weapons of rebellion about thee, a nature fully charged with enmity against God, which in time would have made its own report of what for the present lay like unfired powder silent in thy bosom? O Christian, think of this, and be humbled for thy villainous nature,



nature, and say, Blessed be God that sent his spirit and grace so timely to stay thy hand (as *Abigail to David*) while thy nature meditated nothing but war against God and his laws.

Again, Thirdly, Are the Devils so wickedly malicious against God himself? O Sirs, take the right notion of sin, and you will hate it. The reason why we are so easily persuaded to sin, is, because we understand not the bottom of his design in drawing a creature to sin. It is with men in sinning, as it is with armies in fighting; captains beat their drums for volunteers, and promise all that enlist, pay and plunder, and this makes them come in; but few consider what the ground of the war is, against whom, or for what. Satan enticeth to sin, and gives golden promises what they shall have in his service, with which silly souls are won; but how few ask their souls, whom do I sin against? what is the Devil's design in drawing me to sin? Shall I tell thee? Dost thou think 'tis thy pleasure or profit he desires in thy sinning? Alas! he means not this; he hath greater plots in his head. He hath by his apostacy proclaimed war against God, and he brings thee by sinning to espouse his quarrel, and to venture the life of thy soul in defence of his pride and lust; which that he may do, he cares no more for the damnation of thy soul, than the *Great Turk* doth to see a company of his slaves cut off for the carrying on of his design in a siege: and darest thou venture to go into the field upon his quarrel against God? O earth, tremble thou at the presence of the Lord. This bloody *Joab* sets thee where never any came off alive. O stand not where God's bullets fly, throw down thy arms, or thou art a dead man. Whatever others do, O ye Saints, abhor the thoughts of sinning willingly, which, when you do, you help the Devil against God; and what more unnatural, than for a-child to be seen in arms against his father?

## C H A P. VII.

*Of Satan's Plot to defile the Christian's Spirit with Heart Sins.*

*Doctr. 2.* **T**HAT these wicked spirits do chiefly annoy the Saints with, and provoke them to spiritual sins. Sins may be called spiritual upon a double account, either from the subject whereon they are acted, or from the object about which they are conversant.

First, In regard of the subject; when the spirit or heart is the stage whereon sin is acted, this is a spiritual sin; such are all impure thoughts, vile affections and desires; though the object be fleshly lust, yet are spiritual sins, because they are purely acts of the soul and spirit, and break not forth unto the outward man.

Secondly, In regard of the object, when that is spiritual, and not carnal, such as are idolatry, error, spiritual pride, unbelief, &c. both which *Paul* calls the *filthiness of the spirit*, and distinguisheth them from *filthiness of the flesh*, 2 Cor. vii. 1.

## S E C T. I.

Satan labours what he can to provoke the Christian to heart-sins, to stir up and foment these inward motions of sin in the Christian's bosom; hence it is, he can go about no duty but these haunt him, one motion or other darts in to interrupt him, as *Paul* tells us of himself, *When he would do good, evil was present with him*; if a Christian should turn back when ever these cross the way of him, he should never go on his journey to heaven. It is the chief game the Devil hath left to play against the children of God; now his field-army is broken, and his commanding power taken  
away

away which he had over them, to come out of these his holds where he lies skulking, and fall upon their rear with these suggestions. He knows his credit now is not so great with the soul as when it was his slave; then no drudgery work was so base, that it would not do at his command; but now the soul is out of this bondage, and he must not think to command another's servant as his own: no, all he can do, is to watch the fittest season (when the Christian least suspects) and then to present some sinful motion, handsomely drest up to the eye of the soul, that the Christian may (before he is aware) take this brat up, and handle it in his thoughts, till at last he makes it his own by embracing it; and this he knows will defile the soul: and may be this boy sent in at the window may open the door to let in a greater thief; or if he should not so prevail, yet the guilt of these heart-sins, yea, their very neighbourhood will be a sad vexation to a gracious heart, whose nature is so pure that it abhors all filthiness (so that to be haunted with such motions, is as if a living man should be chained to a stinking carcase, that wherever he goes, he must draw that after him) and whose love is so dear to Christ, that it cannot bear the company of those thoughts without amazement and horror, which are so contrary and abusive to his beloved. This makes Satan so desirous to be ever raking in the unregenerate part, that as a dunghill stirred, it may offend them both with the noisome streams which arise from it.

## SECT. II.

*Use 1.* Let this be for a trial of thy spiritual state. What entertainment finds Satan when he comes with these spirituals of wickedness, and solicits thee to dwell on them? Canst thou dispense with the filthiness of thy spirit, so thy hands be clean? Or dost thou wrestle against these heart-sins as well as others? I do not ask whether such guests come within thy door; for the worst of sins may be found, not only passing by the door of a Christian, but looking in also; as holy motions may be found stirring in the bosom of wicked men: But I ask thee, whether thou canst find in thy heart to lodge these guests, and bid them welcome. 'Tis like thou wouldest

wouldest not be seen to walk in the street with such company, nor lead a whore by the hand through the town, nor violently break open thy neighbour's house to murder or rob him; but canst thou not under thy own roof, in the withdrawing room of thy soul, let thy thoughts hold up an unclean lust, while thy heart commits speculative folly with it? Canst thou not draw thy neighbour into thy den, and there rend him limb by limb by thy malice, and thy heart not so much as cry murder! murder! In a word, canst thou hide any one sin in the roof of thy heart, to save the life of it when enquired after by the word and spirit, as *Rahab* hid the spies, and sent the King of *Jericho's* messengers to pursue them, as if they had been gone? Perhaps thou canst say, The adulterer, the murderer is not here, thou hast sent these sins away long ago, and all this while thou hidest them for the love of thy soul; know it, or thou shalt another day know it to thy cost. If there were a spark of the life of God, or the love of Christ in thy bosom, though thou couldest not hinder such motions in thy soul, yet thou wouldest not conceal them, much less nourish them in thy bosom; when overpowered by them thou wouldest call in help from Heaven against these destroyers of thy soul.

*Use 2.* Shew your loyalty, O ye Saints, to God by a vigorous resistance of, and wrestling against these spirituals of wickedness. First, consider, Christian, heart-sins are sins as well as any; *The thought of foolishness is sin*, Prov. xxiv. 9. Mercury is poison in the water distilled, as well as in the gross body. Uncleaness, covetousness, murder, are such in the heart as well as in the outward; every point of Hell, is Hell. Secondly, consider, thy spirit is the seat of the Holy Spirit. He takes up the whole heart for his lodgings, and 'tis time for him to be gone when he sees his house let over his head. Defile not thy spirit, till thou art weary of his company. Thirdly, consider, there may be more wickedness in a sin of the heart, than of the outward man; for the aggravation of these is taken from the behaviour of the heart in the act. The more of the heart and spirit is let out, the more malignity is let in to any sinful act. *To back-slide in heart*, is more than to back-slide; 'tis the comfort of a poor soul, when tempted and troubled for his relapses, that though his foot slides back, yet his heart turns not back, but faceth Heaven.

Heaven and Christ at the same time ; so *to err in the heart*, is worse than to have an error in the head ; therefore God aggravates *Israel's* sin with this, *They do always err in their heart*, Heb. iii. 10. Their hearts run them upon the error, they liked idolatry, and so were soon made to believe what pleased them best. As on the contrary, the more of the heart and spirit is in any holy service, the more real goodness there is in it, though it fall short of others in the outward expression. The widows two mites surpassed all the rest, Christ himself being Judge ; so in sin, though the internal acts of sin in thoughts and affections seem light upon man's balance, if compared with outward act, yet these may be so circumstanced that they may exceed the other in God's account ;<sup>1</sup> *Peter* lays the accent of *Magus'* sin on the wicked thought, which his words betrayed to be in his heart, *Pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven*, Acts viii. 22. *Saul's* sin in sparing *Agag*, and saving the best of the sheep and oxen, which he was commanded to destroy, was materially a far less sin than *David's* adultery and murder, yet it is made equal with a greater than both, even witchcraft itself, 1 Sam. xv. 23. and whence received his sin such a dye, but from the wickedness of his heart, that was worse than *David's*, when deepest in the temptation ? Fourthly, if Satan get into thy spirit and defile it, O how hard wilt thou find it to stay there ? Thou hast already sipt of his broth, and now art more likely to be overcome at last to sit down and make thy full meal of that, which by tasting hath vitiated thy palate already. It were strange, if while thou art musing, and thy heart hot with the thought of lust, the fire should not break forth at thy lips, or worse.

*Quest.* But what help have we against this sort of Satan's temptation ?

*Answ.* I suppose thee a Christian that maketh this question ; and if thou dost it in the plainness of thy heart, it proves thee one. Who desire in earnest, to be eased of these guests ? Even when a carnal heart prays for deliverance from them, he would be loth his prayer should be heard. *Not yet Lord*, the heart of such a one cries, as *Austin* confessed of himself. Sin is as truly the off-spring of the soul, as children are of our bodies, and it finds as much favour in our eyes, yea more, for the sinner can slay a son to save a sin alive,

alive, Micah vi. 7. and of all sins none are more made on than these heart-sins.

First, because they are the first-born of the sinful heart, and the chief strength of the soul is laid out upon them.

Secondly, because the heart hath more scope in them than in outward acts. The proud man is staked down oft to a short state, and cannot ruffle it in the world, and appear to others in that pomp he would; but within his own bosom he can set up a stage, and in his own foolish heart present himself as great a Prince as he pleaseth. The malicious can kill in his desires as many in a few minutes, as the angel smote in a night of *Senacherib's* host. *Nero* thus could slay all *Rome* on the block at once.

Thirdly, these sins stay with the soul when the others leave it; when the sinner hath crippled his body with drunkenness and filthiness, and cannot follow the Devil's camp any longer in those ways, these cursed lusts will entertain the sinner with stories of his old pranks and pleasures. In a word, these inward lusts of the heart have nothing but the thoughts of a Deity to quell them. Other sins put the sinner to shame before men, and as some that believed on Christ, durst not confess him openly, because they loved the praise of men, so there are sinners who are kept from vouching their lust openly, for the same tenderness to their reputation; but here is no fear of that, if they can but forget that Heaven sees them, or persuade themselves there is no danger from thence; the coast then is clear, they may be as wicked as they please. This makes inward sins so hugged and embraced. If thou therefore canst find thy heart set against these, I may venture to call thee a real Christian, and for thy help against them,

First, Be earnest with God in prayer to move and order thy heart in its thoughts and desires. If the tongue be such an unruly thing that few can tame; O what is the heart, where such a multitude of thoughts are flying forth as thick as bees from the hive, and sparks from the furnace? It is not in man, not in the holiest on earth to do this without divine assistance. Therefore we find *David* so often crying out in this respect to order his steps in his word, to unite his heart to his fear, to incline his heart to his testimonies. As a servant, when the child he tends is troublesome, and will not be ruled

ruled by him, calls out to the Father to come to him, who no sooner speaks but all is hush with him: No doubt holy *David* found his heart beyond his skill or power, that makes him so oft do its errand to God. Indeed God hath promised thus much to his children, to order their steps for them, Psalm xxxvii. 23. only he looks they should bring their hearts to him for that end. *Commit thy work to the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established*, Prov. xvi. 3. or ordered. Art thou setting thy face towards an ordinance, where thou art sure to meet Satan, who will be disturbing thee with worldly thoughts, and may be worse? let God know from thy mouth whither thou art going, and what thy fears are; never doth the soul march in so goodly order, as when it puts itself under the conduct of God.

Secondly, Set a strong guard about thy outward senses: these are Satan's landing places, especially the eye and the ear. Take heed what thou importest at these; vain discourse seldom passeth without leaving some tincture upon the heart, as unwholesome air inclines to putrefy things sweet in themselves; so, unsavoury discourse to corrupt the mind that is pure; look thou breathest therefore in a clear air. And for thy eye let it not wander, wanten objects cause wanton thoughts. *Job* knew his eye and his thoughts were like to go together, and therefore to secure one, he covenants with the other, *Job* xxxi. 1.

Thirdly, Often reflect upon thyself in a day, and observe what company is with the heart. A careful master will ever be looking into his work-shop, and see what his servants are doing, and a wise Christian should do the same. We may know by the noise in the school, the master is not there: much of the misrule in our bosoms ariseth from the neglect of visiting our hearts. Now when thou art parlying with thy soul, make this threefold enquiry:

First, Whether that which thy heart is thinking on be good or evil. If evil and wicked, such as are proud, unclean, distrustful thoughts, shew thy abhorrence of them, and chide thy soul sharply for so much as holding a conference with them, of which nought can come, but dishonour to God, and mischief to thy own soul: and stir up thy heart to mourn for the evil neighbourhood of them, and by this thou shalt give a testimony of thy faithfulness to God. When *David* mourned

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for *Abner*, all *Israel* 'tis said *understood that day, that it was not of the King to slay Abner*: Thy mourning for them will shew these thoughts are not so much of thee, as of Satan.

Secondly, If they be not openly wicked, enquire whether they be not empty, frothy, vain imaginations, that have no subserviency to the glory of God, thy own good, or others; and if so, leave not till thou hast made thyself apprehensive of Satan's design on thee in them; though such are not for thy purpose, yet they are for his, they serve his turn to keep thee from better. All the water is lost that runs beside the mill, and all thy thoughts are waste which help thee not to do God's work in thy general or particular calling. The bee will not sit on a flower where no honey can be sucked, neither should the Christian. Why sittest thou here idle (thou shouldst say to thy soul) when thou hast so much to do for God and thy soul, and so little time to dispatch it in?

Thirdly, If thou findest they are good for matter thy heart is busied about, then enquire whether they be good for time and manner, which being wanting they degenerate.

First, That is good fruit which is brought forth in its season. Christ liked the work his mother would have put him upon as well as herself, *John* ii. but his time was not come. Good thoughts and meditations misplaced, or like some interpretations of Scripture, good truths, but bad expositions; they fit not the place they are drawn from, nor these the time. To pray when we should hear, or be musing on the sermon when we should pray, this is to rob God one way to pay him another.

Secondly, Carefully observe the matter. Thy heart may meditate a good matter, and spoil it in the doing. Thou art (may be) musing on thy sins, and affecting thy heart into a sense of them, but so, that while thou art stirring up thy sorrow, thou weakenest thy faith on the promise, that is thy sin. Or thou art thinking of thy family and providing for that; this thou oughtest to do, and art worse than an infidel if thou neglect, but may be these thoughts are so distracting and distrustful as if there were no promise, no providence to relieve thee. God takes this ill, because it reflects upon  
his



his care of thee; O how near doth our duty herestand to our sin! so much care is necessary ballast to the soul; a little more sinks it under the waves of unbelief; like some things very wholesome, but one degree more of hot or cold would make them poison.

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## CHAP VIII.

*How Satan labours to corrupt the Christian's mind with Error.*

THE second sort of spiritual sins are such as are not only acted in the spirit, but are conversant about spiritual objects proper to the soul's nature, and not laid out in carnal passions of fleshly lusts, in which the soul acts but as a pander for the body, and partakes of their delights only by way of sympathy; for as the soul feels the body's pains no other way than by sympathy, so neither doth it share in the pleasures of the flesh by any proper taste it hath of them, but only from its near neighbourhood with the body doth sympathize with its joy; but in spiritual wickednesses that corrupt the mind, the soul moves in its own sphere, with a delight proper to itself; and there are not less of these than the other. There is hardly a fleshly lust, but hath some sin analogous to it; as they say there is no species of creatures on the land, but may be patterned in the sea: thus the heart of man can produce spiritual sins answering carnal lusts; for whoredom and uncleanness of the flesh, there is idolatry, called in Scripture, spiritual adultery, from which the seat of Antichrist is called spiritual *Sodom*; for sensual drunkenness, there is a drunkenness of the mind, intoxicating the judgment with error, a drunkenness of the heart in cares and fears; for carnal pride in beauty, riches, honour, there is a spiritual pride of gifts, graces, &c. Now Satan in an especial manner assaults the Christian with such as these; it would require a larger dis-

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course

course than I can allow, to run over the several kinds of them; I shall of many pick out two or three. As first, Satan labours to corrupt the mind with erroneous principles; he was at work at the very first plantation of the gospel, sowing his darnel, as soon almost as Christ his wheat, which sprung up in pernicious errors, even in the Apostles times, which made them take the weeding-hook into their hands, and in all their epistles labour to countermine Satan in this design. Now Satan hath a threefold design in this his endeavour to corrupt the minds of men, especially professors with error.

## SECT. I.

First, He doth this in despite to God, against whom he cannot vent his malice at a higher rate, than by corrupting his truth, which God hath so highly honoured, Psal. cxxxviii. 2. *Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy Name.* Every creature bears the name of God, but in his word and truth 'tis writ at length, and therefore he is more choice of this, than of all his other works; he cares not much what becomes of the world and all in it, so he keeps his word, and saves his truth. Ere long we shall see the world, on a light flame; the Heavens and earth shall pass away, *but the word of the Lord endures for ever.* When God will, he can make more such worlds as this; but he cannot make another truth, and therefore he will not lose one jot thereof. Satan knowing this, sets all his wits on work to deface and disfigure it by unsound Doctrine. The word is the glass in which we see God, and seeing him, are changed into his likeness by his Spirit. If this glass be cracked, then the conceptions we have of God will misrepresent him unto us; whereas the word in its native clearness sets him out in all his glory unto our eye.

Secondly, He endeavours to draw into this spiritual sin of error, as the most subtle and effectual means to weaken, if not to destroy the power of godliness in them. The Apostle joins the spirit of power and a sound mind together, 2 Tim. i. 7. Indeed the power of holiness in practice depends much on the soundness of judgment. Godliness is the child of truth, and it must be nursed, if we will have it thrive, with no other  
milk

milk than that of its own mother. Therefore we are exhorted to *desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby*, 1 Pet. ii. 2. If this milk be but a little dashed with error, it is not so nutritive. All error, however innocent soever any may seem (like the ivy) draws away the strength of the soul's love from holiness. *Hosea* tells us, whoredom and wine take away the heart; now error is spiritual adultery. *Paul* speaks of espousing them to Christ: When a person receives an error, he takes a stranger into Christ's bed, and it is the nature of adulterous love to take away the wife's heart from her true husband, that she delights not in his company so much as of her adulterous lover: And do we not see it at this day fulfilled? Do not many shew more zeal in contending for one error, than for many truths? How strangely are the hearts of many taken off from the ways of God, their love cooled to the ordinances and messengers of Christ? And all this occasioned by some corrupt principle got into their bosoms, which oppose Christ and his truth, as *Hagar* and her son did *Sarah*, and her child. Indeed Christ will never enjoy true conjugal love from the soul, till like *Abraham* he turns these out of doors. Error is not so innocent a thing as many think it; it is as unwholesome food to the body, that poisons the spirits, and surfeits the whole body, which seldom passeth away and not break out into sores. As the knowledge of Christ carries a soul above the pollution of the world, so error entangles and betrays it to those lusts, whose hands it had escaped.

Thirdly, Satan in drawing a soul into this spiritual sin, hath a design to disturb the peace of the church, which is rent and shattered when this fire-ship comes among them. *I hear* (saith *Paul*) *there are divisions among you, and I partly believe it, for there must be heresies*, 1 Cor. xii. 18, 19, implying that divisions are the natural issue of heresy. Error cannot well agree with error, except it be against the truth, then indeed (like *Pilate* and *Herod*) they are easily made friends; but when truth seems to be overcome, and the battle is over with that, then they fall out among themselves; and therefore it is no wonder if it be so troublesome a neighbour to truth. O sirs, what a sweet silence and peace was there among Christians a dozen years ago! methinks the looking back to those blessed days in this respect, (though they had also ano-

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ther way their troubles, yet not so uncomfortable, because that storm united, this scatters the Saint's spirits) is joyous to remember in what unity and love Christians walked, that the persecutors of those times might have said, as their predecessors did of the Saints in primitive times, *See how they love one another*; but now alas they may jeer and say, see how they that loved so dearly are ready to pluck one anothers eyes out.

## SECT. I.

The application of this shall be only in a word of exhortation to all, especially you who bear the name of Christ by a more eminent profession of him. O beware of this soul-infection, this leprosy of the head. I hope you do not think it needless, for 'tis the disease of the times. This plague is begun, yea, spreads apace; not a flock, a congregation hardly, that hath not this scab among them. *Paul* was a Preacher the best of us all may write after, and he presseth this home upon the Saints, yea, in the constant course of his preaching it made a piece of his sermon, Acts xx. 30, 31. he sets preachers also on this work; *Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock; for I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter; also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things; therefore watch.* And then he presents his own example, that he hardly made a sermon for several years, but this was part of it, to warn every one night and day with tears. We need not prophesy what imposters may come upon the stage, when we go off; there are too many present above board of this gang, drawing disciples after them. And if it be our duty to warn you of them, surely 'tis yours to watch, lest you by any of them be led into temptation this hour wherein Satan is let loose in so great a measure to deceive the nation. May you not as easily be sowed with this leaven, as the Disciples whom Christ bids beware? Are you privileged above of those famous churches *Galatia* and *Corinth*, many of which were bewitched with false teachers, and in a manner turned to another gospel? Is Satan grown orthodox, or have his instruments lost their cunning, who hunt for souls? In a word, is there not a sympathy between thy  
corrupt

corrupt heart and error? hast thou not a disposition, which like the *foams* of the earth, makes it natural for these weeds to grow in thy soil? Seest thou not many prostrated by this enemy, who sat upon the mountain of their faith, and thought it should never have been removed, surely they would have took it ill to have been told, you are the men and women that will decry Sabbaths, which now ye count holy; you will turn Pelagians, who now defy the name; you will despise prophecy itself, who now seem so much to honour the prophets; you will throw family-duties out of doors, who dare not now go out of doors, till you have prayed. Yet these; and more than these are come to pass, and doth it not behove thee (Christian) to take heed lest that thou fallest also? And that thou mayest not,

• First, Make it thy chief care to know thy heart is changed. If once the root of the matter be in thee, and thou art bot-tomed by a lively faith on Christ, thou art then safe: I do not say wholly free from all error, but this I am sure, free from plunging thy soul into damning errors. *They went out from us, (saith St. John) but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us,* 1 John ii. 19. As if he had said, They had some outward profession, and common work of the spirit with us, which they have either lost or carried over to the Devil's quarters, but they never had the unction of the sanctifying spirit. By this *ver.* 20. he distinguisheth them, and comforts the sincere ones, who possibly might fear their own fall by their departure: *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.* 'Tis one thing to know a truth, and another to know it by unction. An hypocrite may do the former, the Saint only the latter. It is this unction which gives the soul the savour of the knowledge of Christ: those are a fit prey for impostors, who are enlightened, but not enlivened. Oh it is good to have the heart established with grace; this as an anchor will keep us from being set a-drift, and carried about with *diverse and strange doctrines*, as the Apostle teacheth us, Heb. xiii. 9.

Secondly, Ply the work of mortification: Crucify the flesh daily. Heresy though a spiritual sin, yet by the Apostle reckoned among the deeds of the flesh, Gal. v. 20. because it is occasioned by fleshly motives, and nourished by carnal food

food and fuel. Never any turned heretick, but the flesh was at the bottom; either they served their belly, or a lust of pride; 'twas the way to court, or secured their estates, and saved their lives, as sometimes the reward of truth is fire and faggot; some pad or other is in the straw when least seen, and therefore it is no wonder heresies should end in the flesh, which in a manner sprung from it. The rheum in the head ascends in fumes from the stomach, and returns thither, or unto the lungs, which at last fret and ulcerate: Carnal affections first send up their fumes to the understanding, clouding that, yea, bribing it to receive such and such principles for truths, which embraced, fall down into the life, corrupting that with the ulcer of profaneness. So that if thou canst once take off thy engagements to the flesh, and become a free-man, so as not to give thy vote to gratify thy carnal fears and hopes, thou wilt then be a sure friend to truth.

Thirdly. Wait conscionably on the Ministry of the word. Satan commonly stops the ear from hearing sound doctrine, before he opens it to embrace corrupt. This is the method of souls apostatizing from truth, 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4. *They shall turn their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.* Satan like a cunning thief draws the soul out of the road into some lane or corner, and there robs him of the truth. By rejecting of one ordinance, we deprive ourselves of all other: Say not that thou prayest to be led into truth; he will not hear thy prayer, if thou turnest thine ear from hearing the law. He that loves his child, when he sees him play the truant, will whip him to school: If God loves a soul, he will bring him back to the word with shame and sorrow.

Fourthly, Whenthou hearest any unusual doctrine, thought never so pleasing, make not up the match hastily with it; have some better testimony of it before you open your heart to it. The Apostle indeed bids us *entertain strangers*, for some have entertained Angels unawares, Heb. xiii. 3. but he would not have us carried about with *strange Doctrine*, v. 9. by this I am sure some have entertained Devils. I confess, 'tis not enough to reject a doctrine, because strange to us, but ground we have to wait and enquire. *Paul* marvelled that the *Galatians* were so soon removed from him, who had called them unto the grace of Christ, unto another gospel; they

they might sure have stayed till they had acquainted *Paul* with it, and asked his judgment: What, no sooner an impostor come into the country and open his pack, but buy all his ware at first sight! O friends, were it not more wisdom to pray such new motions over and over again, to search the word and our hearts by it, yea not to trust our own hearts, but call in council from others? If your Minister have not so much credit with you, yet the most holy, humble and established Christians you can find. Error is like fish, which must be eaten new, or it will stink: when those dangerous errors sprung up first in *New-England*, O how unsettled were many of the churches! what an out-cry was made, as if some mine of gold had been discovered! but in a while, when those errors came to their complexion, and it was perceived whether they were bound, to destroy churches, ordinances, and power of godliness; then such as feared God, who had stept aside, returned back with shame and sorrow.

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## CHAP. IX.

### *Of Pride of Gifts, and how Satan tempts the Christian thereto.*

THE second spiritual wickedness which Satan provokes unto, especially the Saint, is spiritual pride. This was the sin which made him of a blessed angel a cursed Devil; and as it was his personal sin, so he chiefly labours to diffuse it among the Sons of men; and he so far prevailed on our first parents, that ever since this sin hath and doth claim a kind of regency in the heart, making use of both bad and good to draw her chariot. First, of evil; pride enters into the labours of other sins, they do but work to make her brave, as subjects to uphold the state and grandeur of their Prince. Thus you shall see some drudge and cheat, cozen, oppress; and what mean they? O 'tis to get an estate to maintain their pride.—

Others fawn and flatter, lie, dissemble, and for what ? to help pride up some mount of honour. Again, it maketh use of that which is good ; it can work with God's own tools, his ordinances, by which the Holy Spirit advanced his kingdom of grace in the hearts of his saints. These often are pre-stituted to pride. A man may be very zealous in prayer, and painful in preaching, and all the while pride is the master whom he serves, though in God's livery. It can take sanctuary in the holiest actions, and hide itself under the skirt of virtue itself. Thus while a man is exercising his charity, pride may be the idol in secret for which he lavished out his gold so freely. It is hard starving this sin, there is nothing but it can live on ; nothing so base that a proud heart will not be lifted up with, and nothing so sacred but it will profane, even dare to drink in the bowls of the sanctuary, nay, rather than starve, it will feed on the carcasses of other sins. This minion pride will stir up the soul to resist, yea, in a manner kill some sins, that she may boastingly shew the head of them, and blow the creature up with the conceit of himself above others ; as the *Pharisee*, who through pride bragged that he was not as the *Publican* ; so that pride, if not looked to, will have to do every where, and hath a large sphere it moves in. Nothing indeed (without divine assistance) the creature hath or doth, but will soon become a prey to this devourer ; but I am not to handle it in its latitude. Pride is either conversant about carnal objects, as pride of beauty, strength, riches, and such like, or about spiritual ; the latter we shall speak a little to. I confess for the former, possibly a Saint may be caught in them, no sin to be slighted, yet not so commonly, for ordinarily pride is of those perfections which are suitable, if not proper to the state and calling we are in : Thus the musician, he is proud of the skill he hath in his art, by which he excels others of his rank. The scholar, though he can play perhaps as well, yet is not proud of that, but looks on it as beneath him ; no, he is proud of his learning and choice notions ; and so of others. Now the life of a Christian, as a Christian, is superior to the life of a man as a man ; and therefore doth not value himself by these which are beneath him, but in higher and more raised perfections, which suit a Christian's calling. As a natural man is proud of perfections suitable to his natural estate, as honour, beauty ; so the Christian is prone chiefly, to be puffed  
with



with perfections suitable to his life; I shall name three: Pride of gifts, pride of grace, pride of privileges; these are the things which Satan chiefly labours to entangle him in.

## SECT. I.

First, Pride of gifts. By gifts I mean those supernatural abilities, with which the spirit of God doth enrich and endow the minds of men, for the edification of the body of Christ; of which gifts the Apostle tells us there is great diversity, and all from the same spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 4. There is not a greater variety of colours, and qualities in plants and flowers, with which the earth like a carpet of needle-work, is variegated for the delight and service of man, than there is of gifts in the minds of men, natural and spiritual, to render them useful to one another, both in civil societies, and Christian Fellowship. The Christian, as well as man, is intended to be a social creature; and for the better managing this spiritual common-wealth among Christians, God doth wisely and graciously provide and impart gifts, suitable to the place every one stands in to his brethren, as the vessels are larger or less in the body natural, according to their place therein. Now Satan labours what he can to taint these gifts, and fly-blow them with pride in the Christian, that so he may spoil the Christian's trade and commerce, which is mutually maintained by the gifts and graces of one another. Pride of gifts hinders the Christian's trade, thriving by their commerce, two ways.

First, Pride of gifts is the cause why we do so little good with them to others.

Secondly, Why we receive so little good from the gifts of others.

First, Pride of gifts hinders the doing of good by them to others, and that upon a threefold account.

First, Pride diverts a man from aiming at that end; so far as pride prevails, the man prays, preaches, &c. rather to be thought good by others; rather to enthrone himself than Christ, in the opinions and hearts of his hearers.—Pride carries the man aloft, to be admired for the height of his parts and notions, and will not suffer him to stoop

so low as to speak of plain truths, or if he does, not plainly; he must have some fine lace, though on a plain stuff; such an one may tickle the ear, but very unlikely to do real good to the souls.

Secondly, If this painted *Jezebel* of pride be perceived to look out at the window in any exercise, whether of preaching, prayer, or conference, it doth beget a disdain in the spirits of those that hear such an one, both good and bad. 'Tis a sin very odious to a gracious heart, and often makes the stomach go against the food, though good, through their abhorrence of that pride they see in the instrument. It is indeed their weakness; but woe to them that by their pride lead them into temptation. Nay, those that are bad, and may be in the same kind, like not that in another, which they favour in themselves, and so prejudiced, return as bad as they went.

Thirdly, Pride of gifts robs us of God's blessing in the use of them. The humble man may have Satan at his right hand to oppose him, but be sure the proud man shall find God himself there to resist him, whenever he goes about any duty. God proclaims so much, and would have the proud man know whenever he meets him he will oppose him; *He resists the proud*. Great gifts are beautiful as *Rachel*, but pride makes them also barren like her. Either we must lay self aside, or God will lay us aside.

Secondly, Pride of gifts hinders the receiving of good from others. Pride fills the soul, and a full soul will take nothing from God, much less from man to do it good. Such an one is very dainty: it is not every sermon, though wholesome food, nor every prayer, though savoury, will go down; he must have a choice dish, he thinks he hath better than this of his own; and is such an one like to get good? And truly we may see it, that as the plain ploughman that can eat of any homely food, if wholesome, hath more health, and is able to do more work in a day, than many enjoy or can do in their whole life, that are nice, squeamish, and courtly in their fare; so the humble Christian, that can feed on plain truths, and ordinances, which have not so much of the art of man to commend them to their palate, enjoy more of God, than the nicer sort of professors, who are all to be served in a lordly dish of rare gifts. The church  
of

of *Corinth* was famous for gifts above other churches, 1 *Cor.* i. but not in grace; none so charged for weakness in that, 1 *Cor.* iii. 2. he calls them *carnal, babes in Christ*, so weak, as not able to digest man's meat; *I have fed you, saith Paul, with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.* Why? what is the matter? the reason lies, *ver.* 3. *Ye are carnal, there is among you envy and strife, ver.* 4. *One saith, I am of Paul; another, I am of Apollos.* Pride makes them take parts, and makes sides, one for this preacher, another for that, as they fancied one to excel another. And this is not the way to thrive. Pride destroys love, and love wanting edification is lost. The Devil hath made foul work in the church by this engine. *Zanchy* tells of one in *Geneva*, who being desired to go to hear *Viretus*, that preached at the same time with *Calvin*, answered his friend, if *Paul* were to preach I would leave *Paul* himself to hear *Calvin*. And will pride in the gifts of another so far transport, even to the borders of blasphemy? what work then will pride make, when the gifts are a man's own.

## SECT. II.

Does Satan thus stir up saints to this spiritual pride of gifts? First, here is a word to you that have mean gifts, yet truth of grace, be content with thy condition. Perhaps when thou hearest others, how enlargedly they pray, how able to discourse of the truths of God, and the like, thou art ready to go into a corner, and mourn to think how weak thy memory, how dull thy apprehension, how straitened thy spirit, hardly able (though in secret) to utter and express thy mind to God in prayer. O thou art ready to think those the happy men and women, and almost murmur at thy condition; well, canst thou not say, though I have not words, I hope, I have faith, I cannot dispute for the truth, but I am willing to suffer for it; I cannot remember a sermon, but I never heard the word, but I hate sin and love Christ more than ever? Lord thou knowest I love thee. Truly (Christian) thou hast the better part; thou little thinkest what a mercy may be wrapt up even in the meanness of thy gifts, or what temptations their gifts expose them to, which God, for ought I know,

know, may in mercy deny thee. *Joseph's* coat made him finer than his brethren, but this caused all his trouble, this set the archers a shooting their arrows into his side; thus great gifts lift a Saint up a little higher in the eyes of men, but it occasions many temptations which they meet not with, that art kept low, what with envy from their brethren, malice from Satan, and pride in their own hearts; I dare say, none find so hard a work to go to Heaven as such, much ado to bear up against those winds and waves, while thou creepest along the shore under the wind to Heaven. It is with such, as with some great lord of little estate, a meaner man oft hath money in his purse, when he hath none, and can lend his lordship some at a need. Great gifts and parts are titles of honour among men, but many such may come and borrow grace and comfort of a mean-gifted brother; possibly the preacher of his poor neighbour. O poor Christian, do not murmur or envy them, but rather pity and pray for them, they need it more than others, his gifts are thine, thy grace is for thyself; thou art like a merchant that who hath his factor goes to sea, but he hath his adventure without hazard brought home. Thou joinest with him in prayer, hast the help of his gifts, but not the temptation of his pride.

Secondly, doth Satan labour thus to draw to pride of gifts? this speaks a word to you to whom God hath given more gifts than ordinary, beware of pride, that is now your snare. Satan is at work, if possible he will turn your artillery against yourself; thy safety lies in thy humility, if this lock be cut, the legions of Hell are on thee. Remember whom thou wrestlest with, spiritual wickedness, and their play is to lift up, that they may give the sorer fall. Now the more to stir up thy heart against it, I shall add some soul humbling considerations.

First, Consider these spiritual gifts are not thy own, and wilt thou be proud of another's bounty? Is not God the founder, and can he not soon be the confounder of thy gifts? Thou that art proud of thy gourd, what wilt thou be when it is gone? Surely then thou wilt be peevish and angry; and truly thou takest the course to be stript of them. Gifts come on other terms than grace. God gives grace as a freehold, it hath the promise of this and another world, but gifts  
come

come on liking; though a father will not cast off his child, yet he may take away his fine coat and ornaments, if proud of them.

Secondly, Gifts are not merely for thyself. As the light of the sun is ministerial, its shines not for itself; so all thy gifts are for others: *Gifts for the edifying of the body.* Suppose a man should leave a chest of money in your hands to be distributed to others, what folly is it in this man to put this into his own inventory, and applaud himself that he hath so much money? Poor soul, thou art but God's executor, and by that time thou hast paid all the legacies, thou wilt see little left for thee to brag and boast off.

Thirdly, Know (Christian) thou shalt be accountable for these talents: Now with what face can a proud soul look on God? Suppose one left an executor to pay legacies, and this man should pay them, not as legacies of another, but gifts of his own. Christ at his ascension gave gifts, that his children should receive, thou hast some in thy hand: Now a proud soul gives out all, not as the legacy of Christ, but as his own, he assumes all to himself. O, how abominable is this, to entitle our selves to Christ's honours.

Fourthly, Thy gifts commend thee to God. Man may be taken with thy expression and notion in prayer; but these are all pared off when thy prayer comes before God. O woman (saith Christ) *great is thy faith!* not polite and flourishing thy language. It were good after our duties to sort the ingredients of which they are made up, what grace contributed, and what gifts, and what pride, and when all the heterogeneous stuff is severed, you shall see in what a little compass the acting of grace in our duties will lie.

Fifthly, Consider, while thou art priding in thy gifts, thou art dwindling and withering in thy grace. Such are like corn that runs up much into straw, whose ear is but light and commonly thin. Grace is too much neglected, where gifts are too highly prized we are commanded to be clothed with humility. Our garments cover the shame of our bodies, humility the beauty of the soul; and as a tender body cannot live without clothes, so neither can grace without this clothing of humility. It kills the spirit of praise; when thou shouldst bless God, thou art applauding thyself. It destroys Christian

tian love and stabs our fellowship with the Saints to the heart. A proud man hath not room enough to walk in company, because the gifts of others he thinks stands in his way. Pride so distempers the palate, that it can relish nothing that is drawn from another's vessel.

Sixthly, It is the fore-runner of some great sin, or some great affliction. God will not suffer such a weed as pride to grow in his garden without taking some course or other to root it up; may be he will let thee fall into some great sin, and that shall bring thee home with shame. God useth sometimes a thorn in the flesh, to prick the bladder of pride in the spirit; or at least some great affliction, the very end whereof is *to hide pride from man*, Job xxxiii. 17, 18. As you do with your hot-mettled horses, ride them over plough'd land to tame them, and then you sit safely on their back. If God's honour be in danger through thy pride, then expect a rod, and most likely the afflictions shall be in that, which will be most grievous to thee in the thing thou art proud of. *Hezekiah* boasted of his treasure, God sends the Chaldeans to plunder him. *Jonah* fond of his gourd, and that is smitten. And if thy spirit be blown up with the pride of gifts, thou art in danger of having them blasted, at least in the opinions of others, whose breath of applause (possibly) was a means to upset thy unballasted spirit.

### SECT. III.

Quest. *But how would you direct us against this?*

Ans. Arguments you have had before. I shall only therefore point out two or three doors, where your enemy comes forth upon you; and surely the very sight thereof, if thou art loyal to Christ, will stir thee up to fall upon it.

First, Pride discovers itself in dwelling upon the thoughts of our gifts, with a secret kind of content to see our own face, till at last we fall in love with it. We read of some, whose *eyes are full of adulteries, and cannot cease from sin*; a proud heart is full of himself, his own abilities cast their shadow before him; they are in his eye wherever he goes; the great subject and theme of his thoughts is what he is, and what he hath above others; applauding himself, as *Bernard* confesseth, that (when one would think he had little leisure for such thoughts

thoughts) even in preaching, pride would be whispering in his ear, well done. Now have a care, Christian, of chatting with such company. Run from such thoughts as from a bear. If the Devil can get thee to stand on this pinnacle, while he presents thee with the glory of thy spiritual attainments and endowments for thee to gaze on them, thy weak head will soon turn round in pride; and therefore labour to keep the sense of thy own infirmities lively in thy soul to divert the temptation. As those who are subjects to some kind of fits, carry about them things proper for the disease, that when the fit is coming (which oft is occasioned with a sweet perfume) they may use them for their help. Sweet scents are not more dangerous for them, than any thing that may applaud thee is to thy soul. Have a care therefore not only of wearing such thoughts in thy own bosom, but also of sitting by others, that bring the sweet scent of thy perfections to thee by their flattery.

Secondly, This kind of pride appears in a forwardness to expose itself to view. *David's* brethren were mistaken in him indeed, 1 Sam. xvii. 18. but oft the pride and naughtiness of the heart breaks out at this door. Christ's carnal friends bid Christ shew himself; pride loves to climb up, not as *Zaccheus* to see Christ but to be seen himself. *The fool* (*Solomon* tells us) *hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself*, Prov. xviii. 2. Pride would be somebody, and therefore comes abroad to court the multitude, whereas humility delights in privacy; as the leaves do cover and shade the fruits, that some hand must gently lift them up before you can see the fruit: so should humility and a holy modesty conceal the perfections of the soul, till a hand of providence by some call invites them out. There is a pride in naked gifts as well as in naked breasts and backs: humility is a necessary veil to all other graces, and therefore first, Christian, look whenever thou comest forth to public duty, that thou hast a call: it is obedience to be ready to answer when God calls thee forth; but it is pride to run before God speaks. Secondly, when called, earnestly to implore divine strength against this enemy: shun not a duty for fear of pride, thou mayest shew it in the very seeming to escape it, but go in the strength of God against it; there is more hope of overcoming it by obedience than disobedience.

Thirdly, In envying the gifts of others, when they seem to blind our own, that they have not so fair a prospect as we desire. This is a weed may grow too rank in a good soil. *Aaron* and *Miriam* could not bear *Moses'* honour, Numb. xii. 1. That was the business, though they picked a quarrel with him about his wife (because an *Ethiopian*) as appears plainly, ver. 2. *Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?* they thought *Moses* went away with too much of the honour, and repines that God should use him more than themselves. And it is observable, that the lusting for flesh, broke out among the mixt multitude and baser sort of people, Numb. xi. 4, 5. But this of pride and envy took fire in the bosoms of the most eminent for place and piety. O what need then have we, poor creatures, to watch our hearts when we see such precious servants of God led into temptation? *The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy*, Jam. iv. 5. Our corrupt nature is ever stimulating to this sin. It is as hard to keep our hearts and this sin asunder, as it is to hinder two lovers from meeting together. That is not more ready to be fired with every flash of lightning, than the heart to be kindled at the shining forth of any excellling gift or grace in another. It was one of the first windows that corrupt nature looked out at, a sin that shed the first blood: *Cain's* envy hatched *Abel's* murder. Now if ever thou meanest to get the mastery of his sin,

First, Call in help from Heaven. No sooner hath the Apostle set forth how big and full the heart of man is with envy, but he shews where a fountain of grace is infinitely exceeding that of lust; *the spirit within us lusteth to envy, but he giveth more grace*, ver. 5. And therefore sit not down tamely under this sin, it is not unconquerable. God can give thee more grace than thou hast sin, more humility than thou hast pride. Be but so humble as cordially to beg his grace, and thou shalt not be so proud as wickedly to envy his gifts or grace in others.

Secondly, Make this sin as black and ugly as thou canst possibly to thy thought, that when it is presented so thee, thou mayest abhor it the more. Indeed there need not more than its own face, (wouldest thou look wishfully on it) to make thee out of love with it. For first. This envying of other's gifts casts great contempt upon God, and that more ways than one.

First,



First, When thou enviest the gifts of thy brethren, thou takest upon thee to teach God what he shall give, and to whom; as if the great God should take counsel or ask leave of thee before he dispenseth his gifts, and darest thou stand to thy own envious thoughts with this interpretation? Such an one thou findest Christ himself give, Mat. xx. 15. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?* as if Christ had said, what hath any to do to cavil at my disposal of what is not theirs, but mine to give?

Secondly, Thou malignest the goodness of God. It troubles thee, it seems, that God hath a heart to do good to any besides thyself; thy eye is evil because his is good.—Wouldst not thou have God be good? you had as good speak out, and say, You would not have him God, he can as soon cease to be God, as to be good.

Thirdly, Thou art an enemy to the glory of God, as thou defacest that which should set it forth. Every gift is a ray of divine excellency; and as all the beams declare the glory of the sun, so all the gifts God imparts, declare the glory of God: now envy labours to deface and sully the representation of God, it hath ever something to disparage the excellency of another withal. God shewed *Miriam* her sin by her punishment; she went to bespatter *Moses*, that shone so eminently with the gifts and graces of God, and God spits in her face, Numb. xii. yea fills her all over with a noisome scab. Dost thou cordially wish well to the honour of God? why then hangest thou thy head, and dost not rather rejoice to see him glorified by the gifts of others. Could a *Heathen* take it so well, when himself was passed by, and others chosen to places of honour and government, that he said. He was glad his city could find so many more worthy than himself? and shall a Christian repine that any found so fit to honour God besides himself.

Secondly, Thou wrongest thy brother, as thou sinnest against the law of love, which obligeth thee to rejoice in his good as thy own, yea, to prefer him in honour before thyself. Thou canst not love and envy the same person; envy is as contrary to love, as the severest fire in the body is to the kindly heat of nature. *Charity envieth not*, 1 Cor. xiii. How can it when it lives where it loves? and when thou ceasest to love, thou beginnest to hate and kill, and dost thou not tremble to be found a murderer at last?

Thirdly, Thou consultest worst of all for thyself. God is out of thy reach, what thou spittest against Heaven, thou art sure to have fall on thy own face; and thy brother, whom thou enviest, God stands bound to defend against thy envy, because he is maligned for what he hath of God in him. Thus did God plead *Joseph's* cause against his envious brethren, and *David's* against wicked *Saul*. Thyself only hast real hurt.

First, Thou deprivest thyself of what thou mightest reap from the gifts of others. That old saying is true, What thou hast is mine, and what I have thine when envy is gone. Whereas now like the leach (which they say draws out the worst blood) thou suckest nothing but what swells thy mind with discontent, and is after vomited out in strife and contention. O what a sad thing is it, that one should go from a precious sermon, a sweet prayer, and bring nothing away but a grudge against the instrument God used, as we see in the *Pharisees*, and others at Christ's preaching.

Secondly, Thou robbest thyself of the joy of thy life: *He that is cruel, troubles his own flesh*, Prov. xi. 17. The envious man doth it to purpose, he sticks the honour and esteem of others as thorns in his own heart, he cannot think of them without pain and anguish, and he must needs pine that is ever in pain.

Thirdly, Thou throwest thyself into the mouth of temptation, thou needest give the Devil no greater advantage, it it is a stock any sin almost will grow upon. What will not the Patriarchs do to rid their hands of *Joseph* whom they envied? that very pride which made them disdain the thought of bowing to his sheaf, made them stoop far lower, even to debase themselves as low as hell, and be the Devil's instruments to sell their dear brother into slavery, which might have been worse to him (if God had not provided otherwise) than if they had slain him on the spot. What an impotent and cruel mind did *Saul* shew against *David*, when once envy had envenomed his heart? from that day which he heard *David* preferred in the women's songs above himself, he could never get that sound out of his head, but did ever devote this innocent man to death in his thoughts, who had done him no other wrong, but in being an instrument to keep the crown on his head, by the hazard of his own life with  
*Goliath*

*Goliath.* O it is a bloody sin, it is the womb wherein a whole litter of other sins are formed, *Rom. i. 29. Full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, &c.* and therefore except you be resolved to bid the Devil welcome, and his whole train, resist him in this, that comes before to take up quarters for the rest.

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## CHAP. X.

### *Of Pride of Grace.*

**T**HIS is another way Satan assaults the Christian. It is true, grace cannot be proud, yet it is possible a Saint may be proud of his grace; there is nothing the Christian hath or doth, but this worm of pride will breed in it. The world we live in is corruptible, and all here is subject to putrify, as things kept in a rafty room, subject them to mould. It is not the nature of grace, but the salt of the covenant keeps and preserves the purity of it; in Heaven indeed we shall be safe. But how can a Saint be said to be proud of his grace? A soul is proud of his grace, when he trusts in his grace. Trust and confidence is an incommunicable flower of God's crown as Sovereign Lord, even among men it goes along with royalty. Set up a king, and as such he expects you should give him this, as the undoubted prerogative of his place, and therefore to seek protection from any other is (as it were) to set up another king, *Judg. xi. 15. If indeed you anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust under my shadow.* Therefore when a soul puts his trust in any thing beside God, he sets up a prince, a king, an idol, to which he gives God's glory away. Now it doth not make the sin less, that it is the grace of God we crown, than if it were a lust. 'Tis idolatry to worship a  
holy

holy angel, as well as a cursed Devil; to make our grace our God, as well as our belly our God; nay, rather, it adds to it, because that is now used to rob him of his glory, which should have brought him in the greatest revenue of his glory; certainly the more treasure you put into your servant's hands, the greater wrong he does to you for him to run away with it. I doubt not but *David* could have borne it better to have seen a *Philistine* drive him from his throne than a son, an *Absalom*. But how can or may a Saint be said to trust in his grace?

First, By trusting to the strength of his grace.

Secondly, By trusting on the words of his grace. Indeed a professed trust in grace, I conceive cannot stand with grace; but there is an oblique kind of trust, or that which by interpretation may savour of it. Satan is sly in his assaults.

## SECT. I.

To trust in the strength of grace is to be proud of grace. This is so opposed to that poverty of spirit so commended by our Saviour, Matt. v. by which a man lives in the continual sense of his spiritual beggary and nothingness, and so hath his recourse to Christ, as the poor to the rich man's door, knowing he hath nothing at home to maintain him. Such an one was *Paul*, not able to do any thing of himself; he is not ashamed to let the world know that Christ carries his purse for him. *Our sufficiency is of God*; yea, after many years trading, this holy man sees nothing he hath got, Phil. iii. 13. *I count myself to have apprehended*; he is still pressing forward: Ask him how he lives, he will tell you who keeps house for him; *I live, yet not I*, Gal. ii. 20. Ask a beggar where he hath his meat, clothes, &c. he will say *thank-my good master*. Now Satan chiefly labours to puff the soul up with an over-weening conceit of his own ability, as the readiest means to bring him into his snare; Satan knows 'tis God's method to give his children into his hands, when once they grow proud and self-confident: *Hezekiah* was left to a temptation, 2 Chr. xxxii. 31. *to try him*: Why! God had tried him to a purpose a little before in affliction, what needs this? O! *Hezekiah's* heart was lifted up after his affliction. It was time for God to let the tempter alone a little.

little to foil him; probably now *Hezekiah* had high thoughts of his grace; O, he would never do as he had done before, and God will let him see what a weak creature he is. *Peter* makes a whip for his own back in that bravado, *Though all should forsake thee, yet will not I*. Christ now in mere mercy must set Satan on him, to lay him on his back, that seeing the weakness of his faith, he might be dismounted from the height of his pride. All that I shall say from this, is to intreat thee (Christian) to have a care of this kind of pride. You know what *Joab* said to *David*, when he perceived his heart lifted up with the strength of his kingdom, and therefore would have the people numbered, *The Lord God add unto thy people, how many soever they be, a hundred fold; but why doth the Lord the King delight in this thing?* 2 Sam. xxiv. 3. The Lord add to the strength of thy grace a hundred fold, but why delightest thou in this? Why shouldest thou be lifted up? Is it not grace? Shall the groom be proud because he rides on his master's horse? or the mud wall because the sun shines on it? Mayest thou not say of every dram of grace, as the young man of his hatchet, *Alas Master, it is borrowed!* nay, not only borrowed, but thou canst not use it without his skill and strength that lends it thee. O beware of this, let not those vain thoughts lodge in thee, lest thou enter into temptation. It is a breach a whole troop of sins may enter at, yea will, except speedily filled up.

First, It will make thee soon grow loose and negligent in thy duty. 'Tis a sense of insufficiency keeps a soul at work, to pray and hear, as want in the house holds up the market, no man comes thither to buy what he hath at home. *Up, saith Jacob, go down to Egypt for corn, that we may live and not die*. Thus saith the needy Christian, up soul, to thy God; thy faith is weak; thy patience almost spent, ply thee to the throne of grace, go with thy homer to the ordinances, and get some supplies. Now a soul conceited of his store hath another song, *soul take thine ease, thou art richly laid up for many days*. Let the doubting soul pray; thy faith is strong: let the weak lie at the breast, thou art well grown up: nay, 'tis well if it goes not further to a despising of ordinances, except they have some more courtly fare than ordinary: Such a pass were the *Corinthians* come to, 1 Cor. iv. 8. *Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye reign like Kings without*

*without us.* I pray observe how he lays the accent on the particule *now*; *now ye are rich*, as if he had said I knew the time, if, *Paul* had been come to town, and news spread abroad in the city that *Paul* was to preach, you would have flocked to hear him, and blessed God for the season, but then ye were poor and empty; now ye are full, you have got to a higher attainment; *Paul* is a plain fellow now, he may carry his chear to a hungry people if he will. And when once the heart is come to this, 'tis easy to judge what will follow.

Secondly, This trusting to the strength of grace will make the soul bold and venturous. The humble Christian is the wary Christian, he knows his weakness, and this makes him afraid. I have a weak head saith he, I may be soon disputed into an error and heresy, and therefore I dare not come where such stuff is broached, lest my weak head should be intoxicated: The confident man will sip of every cup, he fears none; no, he is established in the truth, a whole team of heretics shall not draw him aside. I have a vain light heart, saith the humble soul, I dare not come among wicked debauched company, lest I should at last bring the naughty man home with me. But on trusting to the strength of his grace, dares venture into the Devil's quarters. Thus *Peter*, into the rout of Christ's enemies, and how he came off you know; there his faith had been slain on the place, had not Christ sounded a retreat, by the seasonable look of love he gave him. Indeed I have read of some bragging philosophers, who did not think it enough to be temperate, except they had the object for intemperance present; and therefore they would go into taverns and whore-houses, as if they meant to beat the Devil on his own ground; but the Christian knows an enemy nearer, which they were ignorant of; and that he need not go over his own threshold to challenge the Devil. He hath lust in his bosom that will be hard enough for him all his days, without giving it the advantage of ground. Christian, I know no sin but thou mayest be left to commit it, except one. It was a bold speech of him, and yet a good man (as I have heard) If *Clapham* die of the plague, say *Clapham* had no faith: and this made him boldly go among the infected. If a Christian, thou shalt not die of spiritual plagues, yet such may have the plague sores of gross sins running on them for a time, and is not this sad enough? Therefore walk humbly with thy God.

Thirdly

Thirdly, This high conceit of the strength of thy grace will make thee cruel and churlish to thy weak brethren in their infirmities, a sin that least becomes a saint, Gal. vi. 1. *If any one be overtaken, you that be spiritual restore such a one with meekness!* But how shall a soul get such a meek spirit? It follows, *considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.* What makes men hard to the poor? They think they shall never be so themselves. Why are many so sharp in their censures? But because they trust too much to their grace, as if they could never fall. O you are in the body, and the body of sin in you, therefore fear. *Bernard* used to say, when he heard any scandalous sin of a professor, *Hodie illi, eras mihi.* He fell to-day, I may stumble to-morrow.

## SECT. II.

The second way a soul may be proud of his grace, is by resting on it for his acceptance with God. The scripture calls inherent grace *our own righteousness* (though God indeed be the efficient of it) and opposeth it to the righteousness of Christ, which alone is called the *righteousness of God*, Rom. x. 1. Now to rest on any grace inherent, is to exalt our own righteousness above the righteousness of God; and what pride will this amount to? If this were so, then a saint, when he comes to Heaven, might say, This is Heaven which I have built, my grace hath purchased; and thus the God of Heaven should become tenant to his creature in Heaven. No, God hath cast the order of our salvation into another method, not of grace in us, but grace to us. Inherent grace hath its place and office to accompany salvation, Heb. vi. 9. but not procure it. This is Christ's work, not the work of grace. When *Israel* waited on the Lord at Mount *Sinai*, they had their bounds, not a man must come up besides *Moses* to treat with God, no, nor touch the Mount lest they die: Thus all the graces of the spirit wait on God, but none come up to challenge any acceptance of God besides faith, which is a grace that presents the soul not in its own garments. But you will say, What needs all this? where is the man that trusts in his grace? Alas, where is the Christian that doth fully stand clear, and freely come

off his own righteousness? he is a rare pilot indeed that can steer his faith in so direct a course, as not now and then to knock upon his duty, and run on ground upon that grace. *Abraham* went in to *Hagar*, and the children of *Abraham's* faith are not perfectly dead to the law, and may be found sometimes in *Hagar's* arms; witness the flux and reflux of our faith, according to the various aspect of our obedience; when this seems full, then our faith is at a spring-tide, and covers all the mountains of our fears; but let it seem to decline in any service or duty, then the *Jordan* of our faith flies back, and leaves the soul naked. The Devil's spite is at Christ, and therefore since he could not hinder his landing, which he endeavoured all he could, nor work his will on his person when he was come; he goes now in a more refined way to darken the glory of his sufferings, and the sufficiency of his righteousness, by blending our's with his; the doctrine of justification by faith hath had more works and batteries made against it, than any other in the Scripture. Indeed many other errors were but his sly approaches to get nearer to undermine this; and lastly, when he cannot hide this truth (which now shines in the Church like the sun in its strength) then he labours to hinder the practical improvement of it, that we (if he can help it) shall not live up to our own principles, making us at the same time, that in our judgment we profess acceptance only through Christ, in our practice confute ourselves. Now there is a double pride in the soul he makes use of for this end, the one I may call a mannerly pride, the other a self-applauding pride.

First, A mannerly pride, which comes forth in the habit and guise of humility, and that discovers itself, either at the soul's first coming to Christ, and keeps him from closing with the promise, or afterwards in the daily course of a Christian's walking with God; which keeps him from comfortably living on Christ.

First, When a poor soul is starved off the promise by the sense of his own unworthiness and great unrighteousness; tell him of a pardon, alas, he is so wrapt up with the thoughts of his own vileness, that you cannot fasten it upon him. What, will God ever take such a toad as he is into his bosom, discount so many great abominations at once,



and receive him into his favour, that hath been so long in rebellious arms against Him? he cannot believe it, no, though he hears what Christ hath done and suffered for sin, he refuseth to be comforted. Little doth the soul think what a bitter root such thoughts spring from; thou thinkest thou dost well, thus to declaim against thyself, and aggravate thy sins; indeed thou canst not paint them black enough, or entertain too low and base thoughts of thyself for them: But what wrong hath God and Christ done thee, that thou shouldest so unworthily reflect upon the mercy of the one, and merit of the other? Mayest thou not do this, and be tender of the good name of God also? Is there no way to shew thy sense of thy sin, except thou asperse thy Saviour? Canst thou not charge thyself, but thou must condemn God, and put Christ and his blood to shame before Satan, who triumphs more in this than all thy other sins? In a word, though thou like a wretch hast undone thyself, and damned thy soul by thy sins, yet art thou not willing God should have the glory of pardoning them, and Christ the honour of procuring the same? Or art thou like him in the gospel, Luke xvi. 3. *who could not dig, and to beg was ashamed?* Thou canst not earn Heaven by thy own righteousness, and is thy spirit so stout that thou wilt not beg it for Christ's sake, yea, take it at God's hands, who in the gospel comes a begging to thee, and beseecheth thee to be reconciled to him? Ah soul! who would ever have thought there could have lain such pride under such a modest veil? And yet none like it. 'Tis horrible pride for a beggar to starve, rather than to take alms at a rich man's hands; a malefactor rather to chuse his halter, than a pardon from his gracious Prince, but here is one infinitely surpassing both; a soul pining and perishing in sin, and yet rejecting the mercy of God, and the helping hand of Christ to save him. Though *Abigail* did not think herself worthy to be *David's* wife, yet she thought *David* was worthy of her, and therefore she humbly accepted his offer, and makes haste to go with the messengers:— That is the sweet frame of heart indeed, to lie low in the sense of your own vileness, yet to believe; to renounce all conceit of worthiness in ourselves, yet not therefore to renounce all hope of mercy, but the more speedily to make haste to Christ. All the pride and unmannerliness lies in making Christ stay for us, who bids his messengers invite  
poor

poor sinners to come, and tell them *all things are ready*. But may be thou wilt say still, It is not pride that keeps thee off, but thou canst not believe that God will ever entertain such as thou art. Truly, thou mendest the matter but little with this, either thou keepest some lust in thy heart, which thou wilt not part with to obtain the benefit of the promise, and then thou art a notorious hypocrite, who under such an outcry for thy sins, canst drive a secret trade with hell at the same time; or if not so, thou discoverest the more pride in that thou darest stand out, when thou hast nothing to oppose against the many plain and clear promises of the Gospel, but thy peremptory unbelief. God bids the wicked forsake his ways, and turn to him, and he will abundantly pardon him; but thou sayest, thou canst not believe this for thy ownself. Now who speaks the truth? one of you two must be the liar, either thou must take it with shame to thyself, for what thou hast said against God and his promise, (and that is thy best course) or thou must blasphemously cast it upon God, as every unbeliever doth, 1 John v. 10. Nay, thou makest him forsworn, for God (to give poor sinners the greater security in flying for refuge to Christ, who is that *hope set* before them, Heb. vi. 17, 18.) hath sworn they should have strong consolation: *O beatos quorum causa Deus jurat! O miserimos sic nec juranti credamus! Tertul. de pæniti.* O happy we, for whose sake God puts himself under an oath; but O miserable we, who will not believe, God, no, not when he swears.

Secondly, When the soul hath shot the great gulph, and got into a state of peace and life by closing with Christ, yet this mannerly pride Satan makes use of, in the Christian's daily course of duty and obedience, to disturb him, and hinder his peace and comfort. O how uncomfortably do many precious souls pass their days! If you enquire what is the cause, you shall find all their joys run out at the cranies of their imperfect duties, and weak graces: they cannot pray as they would, and walk as they desire, with evenness and constancy: they see how short they fall of the holy rule in the word, and the pattern which others more eminent in grace do set before them; and this, though it doth not make them throw the promises away, and quite renounce all hope of Christ, yet it begets many sad fears and suspicions,

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yea, makes them sit at the feast Christ hath provided, and not know whether they may eat or not. In a word, as it robs them of their joy, so Christ of that glory which he should receive from their rejoicing in him. I do not say, Christian, thou oughtest not to mourn for those defects thou findest in thy graces and duties; nay, thou couldest not approve thyself to be sincere, if thou didst not. A gracious heart, seeing how far short his renewed state (for the present) falls of man's primitive holiness by creation, cannot but weep and mourn, as the *Jews* to behold the second temple; yet, Christian, even while the tears are in thy eyes for thy imperfect graces (for a soul riseth with his grave-clothes on) thou shouldest rejoice, yea triumph over all these, thy defects, by faith in Christ, *in whom thou art compleat*, Col. i. 10. while imperfect in thyself. Christ's presence in the second Temple (which the first had not) made it (though comparatively mean) more glorious than the first, Hag. ii. 9. How much more doth his presence in this spiritual temple of a gracious heart, imputing his righteousness to cover all its uncomeliness, make the soul glorious above man at first? This is a garment, for which, as Christ saith of the lily, we neither spin nor toil; yet *Adam*, in all his created royalty, was not so clad as the weakest believer is with this on his soul. Now, Christian, consider well what thou dost, while thou sittest languishing under the sense of thy own weaknesses, and refuseth to rejoice in Christ, and live comfortably on the sweet privileges thou art interested in by thy marriage to him. Dost thou not bewray some of this spiritual pride working in thee? O! if thou couldest pray without wandering, walk without limping, believe without wavering, then thou couldest rejoice and walk cheerfully. It seems, soul, thou stayest to bring the ground of thy comfort with thee, and not to receive it purely from Christ. O, how much better were it, if thou wouldest say with *David*, *Though my house (my heart) be not so with God, yet he hath made with me a covenant ordered in all things and sure*; and this is all my desire, all my confidence: Christ I oppose to all my sins, Christ to all my wants, he is my all in all, and all above all. Indeed all those complaints of our wants and weaknesses, so far as they withdraw our hearts from relying chiefly on Christ, they are but the language of pride-hankering after the covenant of works. O 'tis hard to forget our mother-tongue, which is so natural to us; labour therefore to be sensi-

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ble of it, how grievous it is to the Spirit of Christ. What would a husband say, if his wife, instead of expressing her love to him, and delight in him, should day and night, do nothing but weep and cry to think of her former husband that is dead? The law (as a covenant) and Christ are compared to two husbands, Rom. vii. 4. *Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead.* Now thy sorrow for the defect of thy own righteousness, when it hinders thy rejoicing in Christ, is but a whining after thy other husband: And this Christ cannot but take unkindly; that thou art not as well pleased to lie in the bosom of Christ, and have thy happiness from him, as with your old husband the law.

Secondly, A self-applauding pride, when the heart is secretly lifted up, so as to promise itself acceptation at God's hands, for any duty or act of obedience it performs, and doth not, when most assisted, go out of its own actings, to lay the weight of its expectation entirely upon Christ; every such glance of the soul's eye is adulterous, yea, idolatrous. If thy heart, Christian, at any time be secretly enticed (as *Job* saith of another kind of idolatry,) or thy mouth doth kiss thy hand; that is, dote so far on thy own duties or righteousness, as to give them this inward worship of thy confidence and trust, this is a great iniquity indeed: For, in this thou deniest the God that is above, who hath determined thy faith to another object. Thou comest to open heaven's gate with the old key, when God hath set on a new lock. Dost thou not acknowledge that thy first entrance into thy justified state was of pure mercy? Thou wast *justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*, Rom. iii. 24. And whom art thou beholden to, now thou art reconciled, for thy further acceptance in every duty or holy action? to thy duty, thy obedience, thyself, or Christ? The same Apostle will tell you, Rom. v. 2. *By whom we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.* If Christ should not lead thee in, and all thou dost, thou art sure to find the door shut upon thee; there is no more place for desert now thou art gracious, than when thou wast graceless, Rom. i. 17. *The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, for the just shall live by faith.* We are not only made alive by Christ, but we live by Christ:  
Faith

Faith sucks in continual pardoning, assisting, comforting mercy from him, as the lungs suck in the air. Heaven's way is paved with grace and mercy to the end.

Be exhorted above all, to watch against this plea of Satan ; beware thou retest not in thy own righteousness : Thou standest under a tottering wall ; the very cracks thou seest in thy graces and duties, when best, bid thee stand off, except thou wouldest have them fall on thy head ; the greatest step to Heaven, is out of our own doors. It hath cost many a man his life when his house was on fire, a desire to save some of the stuff, which venturing among the flames to preserve, they have perished themselves ; more have lost their souls by thinking to carry some of their own stuff with them to Heaven : Such a good work or duty, while they, like lingering *Lot*, have been loth to leave in point of confidence, have themselves perished. O, Sirs, come out, come out, leave what is your own in the fire, fly to Christ naked, he hath clothing for you better than your own ; if poor to Christ, and he hath gold not like thine, which will consume and be found drossy in the fire, but such as hath in the fiery trial passed in God's righteous judgment for pure and full weight. You cannot be found in two places at once, chuse whether you will be found in your own righteousness, or in Christ's. Those who have had more to shew than thyself, have thrown away all, and gone a begging to Christ. Read *Paul's* inventory, *Phil.* iii. what he had, what he did, yet all dross and loss. Give him Christ, and take the rest who will. So *Job*, as holy a man as trod on earth, (God himself being witness,) yet saith, *Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my own soul, I would despise my life*, *Job* ix. 21. He had acknowledged his imperfections before ; now he makes a supposition (indeed *quod non est supponendum* :) If I were perfect, yet would I not know my own soul ; I would not entertain any such thoughts as should puff me up into such a confidence of my holiness, as to make it my plea with God. Like to our common phrase, we say, Such a one hath excellent parts ; but he knows it, that is, he is proud of it. Take heed of knowing thy own grace in this sense. Thou canst not give a greater wound both to thy grace and comfort, than by thus priding thyself in it.

## SECT. III.

First, Thy grace cannot thrive so long as thou thus restand on it. A legal spirit is no friend to grace; nay, a bitter enemy against it, as appeared by the Pharisees in Christ's time. Grace comes not by the law, but by Christ; thou mayest stand long enough by it, before thou gettest any life of grace into thy soul, or further life into thy grace. If thou wouldest have this, thou must set under Christ's wings by faith; from his Spirit in the Gospel alone, comes this kindly natural heat to hatch thy soul to the life of holiness, and increase what thou hast; and thou canst not come under Christ's wings, till thou comest from under the shadow of the other, by renouncing all expectation from thy own works and services. You know *Reuben's* curse, that he should not excel, because he went up into his father's bed; when other tribes increased, he stood at a little number. By trusting in thy own works thou dost worse by Christ; and shalt thou excel in grace? Perhaps some of you have been long professors, and yet come to little growth in love to God, humility, heavenly-mindedness, mortification. And 'tis worth the digging to see what lies at the root of your profession, whether there be not a legal principle that hath too much actuated you. Have you not thought to carry all with God from your duties and services, and too much laid up your hopes in your own actings? Alas, this is as so much dead earth, which must be thrown out, and Gospel principles laid in the room thereof. Try but this course, and see whether the spring of thy grace will not come on apace. *David* gives an account how he came to stand and flourish, when some, that were rich and mighty, on a sudden withered and came to nothing. *Lo* (saith he) *this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches. But I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.* Psal. lii. 7, 8. While others trust in the riches of their own righteousness and services, and make not Christ their strength, do thou renounce all, and trust in the mercy of God in Christ, and thou shalt be like a green olive, when they fade and wither.

Secondly,

Secondly, Christian, you will not thrive in true comfort, so long as you rest in any inherent work of grace, and do not stand clear of your own actings and righteousness. Gospel comfort springs from a Gospel root, which is Christ, *Phil. iii. 3. We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* Now, a soul that rests on any holiness in himself, he grafts his comfort upon himself, not Christ; he sucks his own breast, not Christ's, and so makes Christ a dry nurse: And what comfort can grow on that dry tree? The Spirit is our Comforter, as well as our teacher and counsellor. Now as the Spirit when he teacheth, comes not with any new or strange truth, but takes of Christ's own (what he finds in the word) so where he comforts, he takes of Christ's own, his righteousness, not ours: Christ is the matter and ground of his comfort; all cordials are but Christ distilled, and made up in several promises; his acting, not ours; he doth not say, Soul, rejoice, thou art holy; but, Soul, triumph, Christ is righteous, and is *the Lord thy righteousness*; Not, Soul, thou prayest sweetly, fear not; but, thou hast an Advocate with the Father, Christ the righteous. So that the first step to the receiving of comfort from the Spirit, is to send away all comforters of our own. As in learning of the Spirit, he that will be taught by him, must first become a fool, that is, no way lean to his own understanding; so he that would be comforted, must first be emptied of all self-supports, must not lean to his own comforts. As a Physician first bids his patient cast off all others he hath tempered with; he asks what physic he hath had from them, takes off their plasters, and throws away their physic, and goes about the work *de novo*. So the Spirit, when he comes to comfort a poor soul, first persuades the soul to send away all its own physicians. Oh, saith the soul, I have been in the hand of such a duty, such a course of obedience, and have thought sure now I shall be well, and have comfort now I do this duty, set upon such a holy course. Well, saith the Spirit, if you will have me do any thing, these must all be dismissed in point of confidence. Now, and not till now, is the soul a subject fit to receive the Spirit's comforts. And therefore, friends, as you love your inward peace, beware what vessel you draw your comfort from. Grace is finite, and so cannot afford much.

It is leaking, and so cannot hold long; thou drinkest in a broken dish, and hast thy comfort from thy grace. 'Tis mixed, and so weak; and weak grace cannot give strong consolation; and such thou needest, especially in strong conflicts. Nay, Thy comfort which thou drawest from it is stolen, thou dost not come honestly by it; and stolen comforts will not thrive with thee. O, what folly is it for the child to play the thief for that which he may freely and more fully have from his father, who gives and reproacheth not? That comfort which thou wouldst filch out of thy own righteousness and duties, behold it is laid up for thee in Christ, from whose fulness thou mayest carry as much as thy faith can hold, and none to check thee: Yea, the more thou improvest Christ for thy comfort, the more heartily welcome; we are bid to *open our mouth wide, and he will fill it.*

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## CHAP. XI.

### *The third Kind of Spiritual Pride, viz. Pride of Privileges.*

**T**HE third kind of Spiritual Pride is pride of Privileges; with which these wicked spirits labour to blow up the Christian.

First, When God calls a person to some eminent place, or useth him to do some special piece of service.

Secondly, When God honours a Saint to suffer for his truth or cause.

Thirdly, When God flows in with more than ordinary manifestations of his love, and fills the soul with joy and comfort. These are privileges not equally dispensed to all; and therefore where they are, Satan takes the advantage of assaulting such with pride.

SECT.



## SECT. I.

When God calls a person to some eminent place, or useth him to do some special piece of service. Indeed it requires a great measure of grace to keep the heart low, when the man stands high. The Apostle speaking how a Minister of the Gospel should be qualified, 1 Tim. iii. 6. saith, he must not be a *novice*, or a young convert, *lest he should be lifted up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the Devil.*—As if he had said, This calling is honourable; if he be not well ballasted with humility, a little gust from Satan will toss him into this sin. The seventy that Christ first sent out to preach the gospel, and prevailed so miraculously over Satan; even these while they trod on the serpent's head, he turned again, and had like to have stung them with pride; which our Saviour perceived, when they returned in triumph, and told what great miracles they had wrought; and therefore he takes them off that glorying, lest it should degenerate into vain-glory, and bids them *not rejoice that Devils were subject to them, but rather that their names were written in Heaven.* As if he had said, It is not the honour of your calling, and success of your Ministry will save you; there shall be some cast to the Devils, who shall then say, *Lord, Lord, in thy name we have cast out Devils!* And therefore value not yourselves by that; but rather evidence to your souls that ye are of mine elect, which will stand you more in stead at the great day than all this.

## SECT. II.

A second privilege is, when God honours a person to suffer for his truth; this is a great privilege *Unto you it is given, not only to believe, but to suffer for his sake.* God doth not use to give worthless gifts to his Saints; there is some preciousness in it, which a carnal eye cannot see. Faith, you will say, is a great gift, but perseverance greater; without

without which faith would be little worth; and perseverance in suffering, this above both honourable. This made *John Careless*, our *English* martyr (who though he died not at the stake, yet in prison for Christ) say, such an hour it is as Angels are not permitted to have, therefore God forgive me mine unthankfulness. Now when Satan cannot scare a soul from prison, yet then he will labour to puff him up in prison; when he cannot make him pity himself, then he will flatter him till he prides in himself. Affliction from God, exposeth to impatience; for God, to pride. And therefore, Christians, labour to fortify yourselves against this temptation of Satan: How soon you may be called to suffering work, you know not; such clouds often are not long arising. Now to keep thy heart humble when thou art honoured to suffer for the truth, consider,

First, Though thou dost not deserve these sufferings at man's hand (thou canst and mayest in that regard glory in thy innocency; thou sufferest not as an evil doer) yet thou canst not but confess it is a just affliction from God in regard of sin in thee; and this methinks should keep thee humble. The same suffering may be martyrdom in regard of man and yet a fatherly chastising for sin in regard of God. None suffered without sin, but Christ; and therefore none may glory in them, but he; Christ in his own, we in his: *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ, Gal. vi.* This kept Mr. *Bradford* humble in his sufferings for the truth: None more rejoiced in them, and blessed God for them, yet none more humble under them than he. And what kept him in this humble frame? Read his letters, and you shall find almost in all, how he bemoans his sins, and the sins of the protestants under the reign of King *Edward*: *It was time (saith he) for God to put his rod into the Papists hands; we were grown so proud, formal, unfruitful, yea, to loath and despise the means of grace, when we enjoyed the liberty thereof; and therefore God hath brought the wheel of persecution on us.* As he looked at the honour, to make him thankful; so to sin, to keep him humble.

Secondly, Consider who bears thee up, and carries thee thro' thy sufferings for Christ. Is it thy grace, or his, that is sufficient for such a work? Thy spirit, or Christ's, by which thou speakest, when called to bear witness to the truth? How comes it to pass thou art a sufferer, and not a persecutor; a  
confessor,

confessor, and not a denier; yea, a betrayer of Christ and his Gospel? This thou owest to God: he is not beholden to thee, that thou wilt part with estate, credit, or life itself for his sake. If thou hadst a thousand lives, thou wouldest owe them all to him: But thou art beholden to God exceedingly, that he will call for these in this way; which has such an honour and reward attending it: He might have suffered thee to live in thy lusts, and at last to suffer the loss of all these for them. Oh, how many die at the gallows as martyrs in the Devil's cause, for felonies, rapes, and murders! Or he might leave thee to thy own cowardice and unbelief, and then thou wouldest soon shew thyself in thy colours. The stoutest champions for Christ have been taught how weak they are if Christ steps aside. Some that have given great testimony of their faith and resolution in Christ's cause, even to come so near dying for his name, as to give themselves to be bound to the stake, and fire to be kindled upon them, yet then their hearts have failed: As that holy man, Mr. *Benbridge*, in our *English Martyrology*, who thrust the faggots from him, and cried out, *Irecant! Irecant!* Yet this man, when reinforced in his faith, and endued with power from above, was able within the space of a week after that sad foil, to die at the stake cheerfully; he that once overcome death for us, is he that always overcome death in us. And who should be thy song, but he that is thy strength? Applaud not thyself, but bless him. It is one of God's names, he is called the *glory of his people's strength*, Psal. lxxxix. 17. The more thou gloriest in God that gives thee strength to suffer for him, the less thou wilt boast of thyself: a thankful and proud heart cannot dwell together.

Thirdly, Consider what a foul blot pride gives to all thy sufferings; where it is not bewailed and resisted, it alters the case. The old saying is, that it is not the punishment, but the cause makes the martyr: We may say further, it is not barely the cause, but the sincere frame of the heart in suffering, that makes a man a martyr in God's sight. Though thou shouldest give thy body to be burnt, if thou hast not an humble heart of a sufferer for Christ, thou turnest merchant for thyself. Thou deniest but one self, to set up another; runnest the hazard of thy estate and life to gain some applause, and rear up a monument to thy honour in the opinions of men; thou dost no more in this case than a soldier,

who for the name of valour will venture into the mouth of death and danger, only thou shewing thy pride under a religions disguise makes it the worse. If thou wilt in thy sufferings be a sacrifice acceptable to God, thou must not only be ready to offer up thy life for his truth, but sacrifice thy pride also, or else thou mayest tumble out of one fire into another; suffer here from man, as a seeming champion for the Gospel, and in another world from God, for robbing him of his glory in thy sufferings.

### SECT. III.

A third privilege is, When God flows in with more than ordinary manifestations of his love; then the Christian is in danger of having his heart secretly lifted up in pride. Indeed the genuine and natural effect, which such discoveries of divine love have on a gracious soul, is to humble it. The sight of mercy increaseth the sense of sin, and that sense dissolves the soul into sorrow, as we see in *Magdalen*. The heart which possibly was hard and frozen in the shade, will give and thaw in the sun-shine of love, and so long all pride is hid from the creatures eye. *Then* (saith God, Ezek. xxxvi. 31.) *ye shall remember your ways and your doings, that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight, &c.* And when shall this be, but when God would save them from all their uncleanness? as appears, *ver. 25.* yet notwithstanding this, there remain such dregs of corruption unpurged out of the best, that Satan finds it not impossible to make the manifestations of God's love an occasion of pride to the Christian. and truly God lets us see our proneness to this sin in the short stay he makes, when he comes with any greater discoveries of his love. The Comforter, 'tis true, abides for ever in the Saints bosom, but his joys come, and are gone again quickly. They are as exceedings, with which he feasts the believer, but the cloth is soon drawn; and why so? but because we cannot bear them for our every-day food. A short interview of Heaven, and a vision of love now and then upon the mount of an ordinance, or affliction, cheers the spirits of drooping Christians, who, might they have leave to build tabernacles there, and dwell under a constant shine of such manifestations, would be prone to forget themselves,

selves, and think they were lords of their own comforts. If holy *Paul* was in danger of falling into this distemper of pride from his short rapture, to prevent which, God saw it needful to let him bleed with a thorn in the flesh; would not our blood much more grow too rank, and we too wanton, if we should feed so long on such luscious food? And therefore, if ever, Christian, thou hadst need to watch, then is the time when comforts abound, and God dandles thee most on the knee of his love, when his face shines with clearest manifestations, lest this sin of pride (as a thief in the candle) should swail out thy joy. To prevent which, thou shouldest do well,

First, to look that thou measurest not thy grace by thy comfort, lest thou art led into a false opinion that thy grace is strong, because thy comforts are so. Satan will be ready to help forward such thoughts as a fit *medium* to lift thee up, and slacken thy care in duty for the future. Such discoveries do indeed bear witness to the truth of thy grace, but not to the degree and measure of it: The weak child may be, yea, is oftener in the lap than the strong.

Secondly, do not so much applaud thyself in thy present comfort, as labour to improve it for the glory of God. *Up and eat* (saith the Angel to the Prophet) *because the journey is too great for thee*. The manifestations of God's love are to fit us for our work. It is one thing to rejoice in the light of our comfort, and another to go forth in the power of the Spirit comforting us (as giants refreshed with wine) to run our race of duty and obedience with more strength and alacrity. He shews his pride that spends his time in telling his money merely to see how rich he is; but he his wisdom that lays out his money and trades with it. The boaster of his comforts will lose what he hath, when he that improves his comforts in a fuller trade of duty shall add more to what he hath.

Thirdly, Remember thou dependest on God for the continuance of thy comfort. They are not the smiles thou hadst yesterday can make thee joyous to-day, any more than the bread thou didst then eat can make thee strong without more; thou needest new discoveries for new comforts: Let God hide his face, and thou wilt soon lose the sight, and forget the taste of what thou even now hast. It is beyond our skill or power to preserve those impressions of joy, and comfortable apprehensions of God's favour on our spirit, which sometimes we find; as God's presence brings those, so when he goes he carries

carries them away with him, as the setting sun doth the day. We would laugh heartily at him, who, when the sun shines in at his window, should think by shutting that to imprison the sun beams in his chamber; and dost thou not shew as much folly, who thinkest because thou now hast comfort, thou therefore shalt never shall be in darkness of spirit more? The believer's comfort is like *Israel's* Manna, it is not like our ordinary bread and provision we buy at market, and lock up in our cupboards, where we can go to it when we will: No, it is rained, as that was, from heaven; indeed God provides for them after this sort, to humble them, Deut. viii. 16. *Who fed thee in the wilderness with Manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee.* It was not such mean food because that God is said to humble them, for it was delicious food, therefore called *Angel's food*, Psal. lxxviii. 25. such as if Angels did eat might serve them. But the manner of the dispensing it, from hand to mouth, every day their portion and no more, so that God kept the key of their cupboard, they stood to his immediate allowance; and thus God communicates our spiritual comforts to the same end to humble us. So much for this second sort of spiritual wickedness.

I had thought to have instanced in some other, as hypocrisy, unbelief, morality; but possibly the subject being general, what I have already said may be thought but a digression, and that too long,

I shall therefore conclude this branch of *spiritual wickedness* in a word to those who are yet in a natural state, which is to stir them up from what I have said (concerning Satan's assaulting believers with such temptations) to consider seriously, that Satan's chief design against them also lies in the same sins. These are the wickednesses he labours to plunge you in above all others. If ever you perish, it will be by the hands of these sins. It is your scared conscience, blind mind, and impenitent heart will be your undoing, if you miscarry finally. Other sins, the Devil knows, are preparatory to these; and therefore he draws thee into them to bring thee into these. Two ways they prepare the way to spiritual sins:

First, As they naturally dispose the sinner to them, it is the nature of sin to blind the mind, stupify the conscience, harden the heart, as is implied, Heb. iii. 13. *Lest your heart be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* As the feet of travellers beat the highway hard, so does walking  
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in carnal gross sins the heart; they benumb the conscience, so that in time the sinner loses his feeling, and can carry his lusts in his heart, (as Bedlamites their pins in their very flesh) without pain and remorse. Secondly, as they do provoke God by a judiciary act to give them up to these sins, Lam. iii. 65. *Give them obstinacy of heart* (so it is in the margin) *thy curse unto them.* And when the Devil hath got sinners at this pass, then he hath them under lock and key. They are the fore-runners of damnation; if God leave thy heart hard and unbroken-up, it is a sad sign he means not to sow the seed of grace there. O sinners pray (as he requested *Peter* for him) that none of these things may come upon you; which that they may not, take heed thou rejectest not the offers he makes to soften thee. God's hardening is a consequence of, and a punishment for our hardening our own hearts. It is most true what *Prosper* saith, *Potest homo invitus amittere temporalia, non nisi volens amittere spiritualia:* A man may lose temporals against his will, but not spirituals; God will harden none, damn none against their will.

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## CHAP XII.

*Sheweth what Believers wrestle against these Principalities, Powers, and Spiritual Wickednesses for, in High Places.*

### SECT I.

**T**HESE words contain the last branch in the description of our grand enemy, which have in them some abiguity, the *Adjective* being only exprest in the original; *en tois empour-anois*, that is, in heavenlies; the phrase being defective, our translators read it in high or heavenly places, as if the Apostle intended to set out the advantage of place which

this our enemy, by being above us, hath of us. Indeed this way most interpreters go, yet some, both ancient and modern read the words, not, In heavenly places, but *in heavenly things*. *En tois enpouraniois* (saith *Oecumenius*) is as much as if the Apostle had said, *Emin pale ou peri mikron tinon, alla uper ton en tois epouraniois pragmaton*. We wrestle not for small and trivial things, but for heavenly, yea, for heaven itself, and our adoption as he goes on. The same way *Chrysostom* carries it, *in caelestibus, id est, pro caelestibus Dei*. And after him *Musculus*, and other modern writers. The reasons which are given for this interpretation are weighty.

First, The word elsewhere indefinitely set down, is taken for things, not places, Heb. viii. 5. Nay, one observes this word to be used almost twenty times in the New Testament, and never from any aerial place, but always for things truly heavenly and spiritual\*; the word indeed properly signifies *super-caelestial*, and if applied to places, would signify that where the Devil never came since his fall.

Lastly, There seems no great argument to render Satan formidable by his being above us in place; it is some advantage indeed to men to gain the hill, or be above their enemy in some place of strength, but none at all to spirits; but now take it of things, and then it adds weight to all the other branches of the description. We wrestle with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness, and against all these, not for such toys and trifles as the earth affords, which are inconsiderable whether to keep or lose, but for such as Heaven holds forth; such an enemy, and such a prize, makes it matter of our greatest care how to manage the combat. The word thus opened, the note will be this.

## SECT. II.

The chief prize for which we wrestle against Satan is an heavenly one. Or Satan's main design is to spoil and plunder the Christian of all that is heavenly. Indeed all the Christian hath or desires as a Christian, is heavenly; the world is extrinsical

\* See Dr. GOUGE on the Place.



extrinſical, both to his being and happineſs; it is a ſtranger to the Chriſtian and intermeddles not with his joy nor grief. Heap all the riches and honours of the world upon a man, they will not make him a Chriſtian; heap them upon a Chriſtian, they will not make him a better Chriſtian. Again, take them all away, let every bird have his feather, when ſtript and naked he will ſtill be a Chriſtian, and may be, a better Chriſtian. It was a notable ſpeech of *Erasmus*, if ſpoken in earneſt, and his wit were not too quick for his conſcience, *Nihilo magis ambio opes, et dignitates, quam clumbis equus graves ſarcinas*; He deſired wealth and honour no more than a feeble horſe doth a heavy cloak-bag. And I think every Chriſtian in his right temper would be of his mind. Satan would do the Saint little hurt, if he bent his forces only or chiefly againſt his outward enjoyments; alas, the Chriſtian doth not value them, or himſelf by them; this were as if one ſhould think to hurt a man by beating of his clothes when he hath put them off. So far as the ſpirit of grace prevails in the heart of a Saint, he hath put off the world in the deſire of it, ſo that theſe blows are not much felt; and therefore they are his heavenly treaſures which are the booty Satan waits for.

### SECT. III.

The Chriſtian's nature is heavenly, born from above; as Chriſt is the Lord from heaven, ſo all his offspring are heavenly and holy: now Satan's deſign is to debase this, it is the precious life of this new creature that he hunts for; he hath loſt that beauty of holineſs which once ſhone ſo gloriously on his angelical nature; and now like a true apoſtate he endeavours to ruin that in the Chriſtian, which he hath loſt himſelf. The ſeeds of this war are ſown in the Chriſtian's nature; you are holy, that he cannot endure, *Miles feri faciem*, was *Cæſar's* ſpeech, when to fight with the Roman Citizens, he bids his ſoldiers ſtrike at their face; theſe Citizens (ſaid he) love their beauty, mar that and war all. The ſoul is the face whereon God's image is ſtamped: holineſs is the beauty of this face, which makes us indeed like God; this Satan knows God loves, and therefore he labours to wound and diſfigure this, that he may at  
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once glory in the Christian's shame, and pour contempt upon God in breaking his image; and is it not worth engaging limb and life in battle against this enemy, who would rob us of that which makes us like God himself? Have you forgot the bloody articles of peace that *Nahash* offered to the men of *Jabesh-Gilead*? no peace to be had, except they would let him thrust out their right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all *Israel*; how it was entertained, read 1 Sam. xi. 6. The face is not so deformed that hath lost its eye, as the soul is, that loseth his holiness; and no peace to be expected at Satan's hands except he may deprive us of this; methinks at the thought of this, the spirit of the Lord should come upon the Christian, and his anger should be kindled much more against this cursed spirit, than *Saul's* and the men of *Israel's* was, against *Nahash*.

Secondly, The Christian's trade is heavenly; the merchandize he deals for is of the growth of that heavenly country, Phil. iii. 20. *Our conversation is in Heaven*. Every man's conversation is suitable to his calling; he whose trade is heavenly, follows that close. *Every man minds his own business*, the Apostle tells us. You may possibly find a tradesman out of his shop now and then, but he is as a fish out of the water, never in his element till he be in his calling again. Thus when the Christian is about the world, and the wordling about heavenly matters, both are men out of their way, not right girt, till they get into their employment again. Now this heavenly trade is that which Satan doth in an especial manner labour to stop. Could the Christian enjoy but a free trade with heaven a few years without molestation, he would soon grow a rich man, too rich indeed for earth; but what with losses sustained by the hands of this pirate Satan, and also the wrong he receives by the treachery of some in his own bosom (that like unfaithful servants hold correspondence with this robber) he is kept but low in this life, and much of his gains are lost; now the Christian's heavenly trade lies either within doors or abroad; he can be free in neither, Satan is at his heels in both.

First, Within doors, this I may call his home-trade, which is spent in secret between God and his own soul; here the Christian drives an unknown trade, he is at heaven and home again, richly laden in his thoughts with heavenly meditations, before the world knows where he hath been. Every creature  
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he sees is a text for his heart to raise some spiritual matter and observations from: Every sermon he hears cuts him out work to make up and enlarge upon when he gets alone. Every providence is as wind to his sails, and sets his heart a moving in some heavenly affection or other, suitable to the occasion. One while he is wrapped up with joy in the consideration of mercy, another while melted into godly sorrow from the sense of his sins. Sometimes exalting God in his praises, anon abasing himself before God for his own vileness. One while he is at the breast of the covenant, milking out the consolations of the promises; another while working his heart into an holy awe and fear of the threatenings. Thus the Christian walks aloft, while the base worldling is licking the dust below. One of these heavenly pearls which the Christian trades for is worth more than the worldling gets with all his sweat and travel in his whole life. The Christian's feet stand where other men's heads are; he treads on the moon, and is clothed with the sun; he looks down on earthly men (as one from an high hill doth upon those that live in some fen or moor) and sees them buried in a fog of carnal pleasures and profits, while he breathes in a pure heavenly air, but yet not so high as to be free from all storms and tempests; many a sad gust he hath from sin and Satan without. What else mean those sad complaints and groans which come from the children of God, that their hearts are so dead and dull, their thoughts so roving and unfixt in duty, many times so wicked and filthy, that they dare hardly tell what they are, for fear of staining their own lips, and offending the ears of others by naming them? Surely the Christian finds it in his heart to will and desire he could meditate, pray, hear, and live after another sort than this, doth he not? yes, he doth; but so long as there is a Devil to tempt, and we continue within his walk, it will be thus, more or less; as fast as we labour to clear the spring of our hearts, he will be labouring to roll or stop it again: So that we have two works to do at once, to perform a duty, and watch him that opposeth us; trowel and sword both in our hands. They had need work hard indeed, who have others continually endeavouring to pull down, as they are labouring to rear up the building.

Secondly, That part of the Christian's trade which lies abroad, is heavenly also. Take a Christian in his relations,  
calling,

calling, neighbourhood, he is a heavenly trader in all; the great business of his life is to be doing or receiving some good; that company is not for him, that will neither give nor take this. What should a merchant do where there is no buying nor selling? Every one labours (as his calling is) to seat himself where trade is quickest, and he is like to have most. The Christian (where he may chuse) takes such in relations near to himself (husband, wife, servants) as may suit with his heavenly trade, and not such as will be a pull-back to him: he falls in with the holiest persons as his dearest acquaintance; if there be a Saint in the town where he lives, he will find him out, and this shall be the man he will consort with; and in his conversation with these and all else, his chief work is for Heaven, his heavenly principle within inclines him to it. Now this alarms Hell: What, not content to go to Heaven himself, but by his holy examples, gracious speeches, sweet counsels, seasonable reproofs, will be trading with others, and labour to carry them along with him also? This brings the Lion mad out of his den; such to be sure, shall find the Devil in their way to oppose them. *I would have come (saith Paul) but Satan hindered me.* He that will vouch God, and let it appear by the tenure of his conversation, that he trades for him, shall have enemies enough, if the Devil can help him to such.

Thirdly, The Christian's hopes are all heavenly; he desires not any thing the world hath to give him. Indeed, he would think himself the most miserable man of all others, if here were all he could make of his religion. No, it is Heaven and eternal life that he expects, and though he be so poor as not to be able to make a will of a groat, yet he counts himself a greater heir than if he were child to the greatest Prince on earth. This inheritance he sees by faith, and can rejoice in hope of the glory which it will bring him. The cheating glory of the great ones of this world, moves him not to envy their fancied pomp; but when on the dunghill himself, he can forget his own present sorrows to pity them in all their bravery, knowing that within a few days the cross will be off his back, and the crowns off their heads together; their portion will be spent when he shall be to receive all his. These things entertain him with such joy, that they will not suffer him to acknowledge himself miserable, when others think him, and the Devil tells him he is so. This, this

this torments the very soul of the Devil, to see the Christian under sail for Heaven, filled with the sweet hope of his joyful entertainment when he comes there; and therefore he raiseth what storms and tempests he can, either to hinder his arrival in that blessed port, (which he most desires, and doth not wholly despair of) or at least to make it a troublesome winter-voyage, such as *Paul's* was, in which they suffered so much loss. And this indeed very often he obtains in such a degree, that by his violent impetuous temptations beating long upon the Christian, he makes him throw over much precious lading of his joys and comforts; yea, sometimes he brings the soul through stress of temptation to think of quitting the ship, while for the present all hope of being saved seems to be taken away. Thus you see what we wrestle with Devils for.

#### SECT. IV.

This is a word of reproof to four sorts of persons.

First, To those that are so far from wrestling against Satan for this heavenly prize, that they resist the offer of it. Instead of taking Heaven by force, they keep it off by force. How long hath the Lord been crying in our streets, *Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand?* How long have Gospel-offers rung in our ears, and yet to this day many Devil-deluded souls furiously drive on towards hell, and will not be persuaded back, who refuse to be called the children of God, and chuse rather the Devil's bondage than the glorious liberty with which Christ would make them free, esteeming the pleasures of sin for a season greater treasures than the riches of Heaven. It is said of *Cato* (who was *Cæsar's* bitter enemy) that when he saw *Cæsar* prevail, rather than fall into his hand and stand to his mercy, he laid violent hands on himself; which *Cæsar* hearing of, passionately broke out into these words, *O Cato, cur invidisti mihi salutem tuam?* *O Cato*, why didst thou envy me the honour of saving thy life? And do not many walk as if they grudged Christ the honour of saving their souls? What other account can you give of sinners rejecting him. Are not Heaven and happiness things desirable, and to be preferred before sin and misery? Why then do you not embrace them? or are they the worse,

worse, because they come swimming to you in the blood of Christ? Oh how ill must Christ take it to be thus used, when he comes on such a gracious embassy? May he not say to thee, as once he did to those officers sent to attack him, *Do you come out against me as a thief with swords and staves?* If he be a thief, it is only in this, that he would steal your sins from you, and leave Heaven in the room. Oh, for the love of God think what you do; it is eternal life you put away from you in doing of which *you judge yourselves unworthy of it*, Acts xiii. 46.

Secondly, It reproves those who are Satan's instruments to rob souls of what is heavenly. Among thieves there are some they call *Setters*, who enquire where a booty is to be had; which when they have found, and know such a one travels with a charge about him, then they employ some other to rob him, and are themselves not seen in the business. The Devil is the grand *Setter*, he observes the Christian how he walks, what place and company he frequents, what grace or heavenly treasure he carries in his bosom; which when he hath done, he hath his instruments for the purpose to execute his design. Thus he considered the admirable graces of *Job*, and casts about how he might rob him of his heavenly treasure: and who but his wife and his friends must do this for him? well knowing that his tale would receive credit from their mouths.) O friends, ask your consciences whether you have not done the Devil some service of this kind in your days. Possibly you have a child or servant who once looked heaven-ward, but your brow-beating of them scared them back, and now (may be) they are as carnal as you would have them: Or possibly thy wife, before acquainted with thee, as full of life in the ways of God; but since she hath been transplanted into thy cold soil, what by thy frothy speeches and unsavoury conversation, at best thy worldliness and formality, she is now both decayed in her graces, and a loser in her comforts. O man, what an indictment will be brought against thee for this at God's bar? You would come off better, were it for robbing one of his money and jewels, than of his graces and comforts.

Thirdly, It reproves the woeful negligence most shew in labouring for this heavenly prize. None but would be glad their souls might be saved at last; but where is the man or

woman that make it appear by their vigorous endeavours, that they are in earnest? What warlike preparation do they make against Satan, (who lies between them and home?) Where are their arms, where their skill to use them, their resolution to stand to them, and constant care to exercise themselves in the use of them? Alas, this is a rarity indeed, not to be found in every house where the profession of religion is hung up at the door: If wounding and wishing would bring them to Heaven, then they may come thither; but as for this wrestling and fighting, this making religion our business, they are as far from these, as at last they are likely to be from Heaven. They are of his mind in *Tully*, who in a summer's day, as he lay lazing himself on the grass, would say, *O utinam hoc esset laborare!* O that this were to work, that I could lie here and do my day-labour! Thus many melt and waste their lives in sloth, and say in their hearts, O that this were the way to Heaven! but will use no means to furnish themselves with grace for such an enterprise. I have read of a great Prince in Germany, invaded by a more potent enemy than himself, yet from his friends and allies (who flocked in to his help) he soon had a good army, but had no money (as he said) to pay them; but the truth is, he was loth to part with it, for which some in discontent went away, others did not vigorously assist him, so he was soon beat out of his kingdom; and his coffers (when his palace was rifled) were found full of treasure. Thus he was ruined, as some sick mendicant, because unwilling to be at the cost of paying a physician. It will add to the misery of damned souls, when they shall have leisure enough to consider what they have lost in losing God, to remember what means, talents they once had towards the obtaining of everlasting life, but had not a heart to use them.

Fourthly, It reproves those who make a great bustle and noise in religion, who are forward in profession, very busy to meddle with the strictest duties, as if Heaven had monopolized their whole hearts; but like the eagle, when they tower highest their prey is below, where their eye is also. Such a generation there ever was and will be, that mingle themselves with the Saints of God who pretend to Heaven, and have their outward garb faced and fringed, as it were, with heavenly speeches and duties, while their hearts are lined with hypocrisy, whereby they deceive others, and most of all themselves;

uch may be the world's Saints, but they are Devils in Christ's account. *Have not I chosen twelve, one of you is a Devil?* And truly, of all devils, none so bad as the professing Devil, the preaching, praying Devil. O sirs, be plain-hearted, religion is as tender as your eye, it will not be jested with: Remember the vengeance which fell on *Belshazzar*, while he caroused in the bowls of the Sanctuary. Religion and the duties of it are consecrated things, not made for thee to drink thy lusts out of. God hath remarkably appeared in discovering and confounding such as have prostituted sacred things to worldly ends.

*Jezebel* fasts and prays, the better to devour *Naboth's* vineyard, but was devoured by it. *Absalom* was as sick till he had ravished his father's crown, as his brother *Ammon* till he had done the like to his sister; and to hide his treason, he puts on a religious cloak, and therefore begs leave to go and pay his vow in *Hebron*, when he had another game in chase; and did he not fall by the hand of his hypocrisy? Of all men, their judgment comes with most speed, who silver over worldly or wicked enterprizes with heavenly semblances. Of this gang were those, 2 Pet. ii. 3. concerning whom the the Apostle saith, *their damnation slumbers not*; and those, Ezek. civ. 7, 8. to whom God saith, *I the Lord will answer him by myself, and I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*

*Use 2.* See whether thou pursuest heavenly things or earthly. We need not be so ignorant of our souls state and affairs, did we oftener converse with our thoughts, and observe the haunts of our hearts. We can tell what dish pleaseth our palate best; and may you not tell whether Heaven or earth be the most savoury meat to your souls? And if you should ask, how you might know whether Heaven be the prize you chiefly desire, I would put you upon this double trial.

First, Art thou uniform in thy pursuit? Dost thou contend for Heaven, and that which leads to Heaven? Earthly things God is pleased to retail; all have some, none have all. But in heavenly treasure he will not break the whole piece, and cut it into remnants. If thou wilt have Heaven, thou must have Christ; if Christ, thou must like his service as well as his



his sacrifice ; no holiness, no happiness. If God would cut off so much as would serve men's turns, he might have customers enough : *Balaam* himself likes one end of the piece, *he would die like a righteous man*, though live like a wizard as he was ; no, God will not deal with such peddling merchants ; that man alone is for God, and God for him, who will come fully up to God's terms and take all off his hands. One fitly compares holiness and happiness to those two sisters *Leah* and *Rachel*. Happiness, like *Rachel*, seems the fairer (even a carnal heart might fall in love with that) but holiness, like *Leah*, is the elder, and beautiful also, though in this life it appears with some disadvantage, her eyes being bleared with tears of repentance, and her face furrowed with the works of mortification : But this is the law of that heavenly country, *That the younger sister must not be bestowed before the elder*. We cannot enjoy fair *Rachel*, Heaven and happiness, except we first embrace tender eyed *Leah*, holiness, with all her severe duties of repentance and mortification. Now, Sirs, how like you this method ? Are you content to marry Christ, and then serve a hard apprenticeship in temptations both of prosperity and adversity, enduring the heat of the one, and the cold of the other) to wait till at last the other be given into your bosoms ?

Secondly, If indeed Heaven and heavenly things be the prize thou wrestlest for, thou wilt discover a heavenly deportment of heart, even in earthly things. Wherever thou meetest a Christian, he is going to Heaven ; Heaven is at the bottom of his lowest actions. Now observe thy heart in three particulars ; in getting, in using, and in keeping earthly things, whether it be after a heavenly manner.

First, *In getting earthly things*. If Heaven be thy chief prize, then thou wilt be ruled by a heavenly law in the gathering of these. Take a carnal wretch, and what his heart is set on, he will have by hook or by crook. A lie sets *Gehazi's* mouth well enough, so he may fill his pockets by it. *Jezebel* dares mock God, and murder an innocent man for an acre or two of ground. *Absalom, regnandi causi*, what will he not do ? God's fence is too low to keep a graceless heart in bounds, when the game is before him ; but a soul that hath Heaven in his eye, is ruled by Heaven's law ; he dares not step out of Heaven's road to take up a crown, as we see in *David's* carriage towards *Saul*. Indeed, in so doing, he should cross himself

himself in his own grand design, which is the glory of God, and the happiness of his own soul in enjoying of him; upon these very terms the servants of God have refused to be rich and great in the world, when either of these lay at stake: *Moses* threw his court-preferment at his heels, *refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter*. *Abraham* scorned to be made rich by the King of *Sodom*, Gen. xiv. 22. that he might avoid the suspicion of covetousness and self-seeking; it shall not be said another day, that he came to enrich himself with the spoil, more than to rescue his kinsman. *Nehemiah* would not take the tax to maintain his state, when he knew they were a poor people, *because of the fear of the Lord*. Dost thou walk by this rule? wouldest thou gather no more estate or honour than thou mayest have with God's leave, and will stand with thy hopes of Heaven?

Secondly, Dost thou discover a heavenly spirit in using these things?

First, The Saint improves his earthly things for a heavenly end. Where layest thou up thy treasure? dost thou bestow it on thy voluptuous paunch, thy hawks and thy hounds; or lock it up in the bosom of Christ's poor members? What use makest thou of thy honour and greatness, to strengthen the hands of the godly or the wicked? and so of all thy other temporal enjoyments. A gracious heart improves them for God; when a Saint prays for these things, he hath an eye to some heavenly end. If *David* prays for life, it is not that he may live, but *live and praise God*, Psal. cxix. 175. When he was driven from his throne by the the rebellious arms of *Absalom*, see what his desire and hope, was 2 Sam. xv. 25. *The King said to Zadok, Carry back the Ark of God into the city: If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation*. Mark! not shew me my crown, my palace, but *the Ark, the House of God*.

Secondly, A gracious heart pursues earthly things with a holy indifference, saving the violence and zeal of his spirit for the things of Heaven: He useth the former as if he used them not, with a kind of non-attendance; his head and heart is taken up with higher matter, how he may please God, thrive in his grace, enjoy more intimate communion with Christ in his ordinances; in these he spreads all his sails, plies all his oars, strains every power. Thus we find  
*David*

*David* on full speed; *my soul followeth hard after thee*, Ps. lxxiii. And before the ark we find him dancing with all his might. Now a carnal heart is quite contrary; his zeal is for the world, and his indifference in the things of God: He prays as if he did not pray, &c. he sweats in his shop, but chills and grows cold in his closet: Oh how hard to pully him up to a duty of God's worship, or to get him out to an ordinance! no weather shall keep him from the market, rain, blow or snow, he goes thither; but if the church path be but a little wet or the air somewhat cold, 'tis apology enough for him if his pew be empty. When he is about any worldly business, he is earnest at it, as the idolatrous smith in hammering of his image, *who* (the prophet saith) *worketh it with the strength of his arms, yea, he is hungry and his strength faileth, he drinketh not, and is faint*, Isa. xliv. 12. So zealous is the muck-worm in his worldly employments, that he will pinch his carcase, and deny himself his repast in due season, to pursue that; the kitchen there shall wait on the shop: But in the worship of God, 'tis enough to make him sick of the sermon, and angry with the preacher, if he be kept beyond his hour; here the sermon must give place to the kitchen; for the man for his pleasures and carnal pastimes, he tells no clock at his sports, and knows not how the day goes; when night comes, he is angry that it takes him off: But at any heavenly work, O how is the man punished! time now hath got leaden heels, all he doth at a sermon is to tell the clock, if men were not willing to deceive themselves, surely they might know which way their hearts go by the swift motion, or the hard tugging and slow pace they stir, as well as they know in a boat whether they row against the tide or with it.

Thirdly, The Christian useth these things with a holy fear, lest earth should rob heaven, and outward enjoyments prejudice his heavenly interest; he eats in fear, works in fear, rejoiceth in his abundance with fear: As *Job* sanctified his children by offering a sacrifice, out of a fear, lest they had sinned; so the Christian is continually sanctifying his earthly enjoyments by prayer, that he may be delivered from the snare of them.

Thirdly, The Christian is heavenly in his keeping of earthly things. The same heavenly law which he went by in getting, he observes in holding them. As he dares not say he will be rich and

and honourable in the world, but if God will: so neither will he hold what he hath, he only keeps them until his heavenly Father calls for them that first gave them: If God will continue them to him, and entail them on his posterity too, he blesseth God, and so he desires to do also when he takes them away. Indeed God's meaning in the great things of this world, which sometimes he throws in upon the Saints, is chiefly to give them the greater advantage of expressing their love to him, in denying them for his sake. God never intended by that strange providence, in bringing *Moses* to *Pharoah's Court*, to settle him there in worldly pomp and grandeur; a carnal heart indeed would have expounded providence, and interpreted it as a fair occasion put into his hands by God to have advanced himself into the Throne, (which some say he might in time have done) but as an opportunity to make his faith and self-denial more eminently conspicuous, in throwing all these at his heels, for which he hath so honourable a remembrance among the Lord's worthies, Heb. xi. 24, 25. And truly, a gracious soul reckons he cannot make so much of his worldly interests any other way, as by offering them up for Christ's sake; however, that traitor thought *Mary's* ointment might have been carried to a better market, yet no doubt that good woman herself was only troubled that she had not one more precious, to pour on her dear Saviour's head. This makes the Christian ever to hold the sacrificing knife at the throat of his worldly enjoyments, ready to offer them up when God calls; over-board they shall go, rather than hazard a wreck to faith or a good conscience; he sought them in the last place, and therefore he will part with them in the first. *Naboth* will hazard the King's anger (which at last cost him his life) rather than sell an acre or two of land which was his birth-right. The Christian will expose all he hath in this world to preserve his hopes for another. *Jacob* in his march towards *Esau*, sent his servants with his flocks before, and came himself with his wives behind; if he can save any thing from his brother's rage, it shall be what he loves best: If the Christian can save any thing, it shall be his soul, Christ and Heaven, and then no matter if the rest go; even then he can say, not as *Esau* to *Jacob*, I have a great deal; but as *Jacob* to him, I have all Gen. xxxiii. 9, 11. all I want, all I desire; as *David* expressed it, *This is all my salvation, and desire*, 2 Sam. xxiii.

Now see if thy heart be thus tuned. Does Heaven give law to thy earthly enjoyments? Wouldest thou not keep thy honour, estate, no, not life itself, to prejudice thy heavenly nature and hopes? Which wouldest thou chuse, if thou couldest not keep both, a whole skin, or a sound conscience? It was a strange answer, if true, which the Historian saith *Henry* the Fifth gave to his father, who had usurped the Crown, and now dying, sent for this his son, to whom he said, Fair son, take the Crown (which stood on his pillow by his head) but God knows how I came by it. To whom he answered, I care not how you came by it; now I have it, I will keep it as long as my sword can defend it. He that keeps earth by wrong, cannot expect Heaven by right.

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## CHAP. XIII.

### *An Exhortation to the Pursuit of Heaven and Heavenly Things.*

Use 3. **I**S it Heaven and all that is heavenly that Satan seeks to hinder us of? Let this provoke us the more earnestly to contend for them. Had we to do with an enemy that came only to plunder us of earthly trifles, would honours, estates, and what the world affords us, stay his stomach, it might suffer a debate, in a soul that hath hopes of Heaven, whether it were worth fighting to keep this lumber; but Christ and Heaven, these sure are too precious to part with on any terms. *Ask the kingdom for him also*, saith *Solomon* to *Bathsheba*, when she begged *Abishag* for *Adonijah*. What can the Devil leave thee worth if he deprive thee of these? and yet I confess I have heard of one, that wished God would let him alone, and not take him from what he had here: Vile brute! the choice of a swine, and not a man, that could chuse to wallow in the dung of his carnal pleasures, and wish himself  
for

for ever shut up with his swill in the hog's coat of this dung-hill earth, rather than leave these to dwell in Heaven's palace, and be admitted to no meaner pleasures than what God himself with his Saints enjoy. It were even just if God gave such brutes as these a swine's face to their swinish hearts: But alas, how few then should we meet that would have the countenance of a man? The greatest part of the world, even all that are carnal, being of the same mind, though not so impudent, to speak what they think. The lives of men tell plain enough that they say in their hearts, it is good being here, that they wish they could build tabernacles on earth for all the mansions that are prepared in heaven. The transgression of the wicked said in *David's* heart, that *the fear of God was not before him*, Psal. xxxvi. 1. And may not the worldliness of a muck-worm say in the heart of any rational man, that Heaven and heavenly excellencies are not before their eyes or thoughts? O, what a deep silence is there concerning these in the conversations of men! Heaven is such a stranger to most, that very few are heard to enquire the way thither, or so much as ask the question in earnest, What they shall do to be saved. The most express no more desires of attaining Heaven, than those blessed souls now in Heaven do of coming again to dwell on earth; alas, their heads are full of other projects; they are either as *Israel*, scattered over the face of the earth to gather straw, or busied to pick that straw they have gathered, labouring to get the world, or pleasing themselves with what they have got. So that it is of no use to argue to call men off the world to the pursuit of Heaven, and what is heavenly.

First, For earthly things, it is not necessary that thou hast them; that is necessary which cannot be supplied *per vicarium*, with somewhat besides itself. Now, there is no such earthly enjoyments, but may be supplied, as to make its room more desirable than its company. In Heaven there shall be light, and no sun; a rich feast, and yet no meat; glorious robes, and yet no clothes; there shall want nothing, and yet none of this worldly glory be found there; yea, even while we are here, they may be recompensed: Thou may be under infirmities of body, and yet better than if thou hadst health: *The inhabitants shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity*, Isa.

xxxiii. 34. Thou mayest miss of worldly honour, and obtain with those worthies of Christ, Heb. xi. a good report by faith, and that is a name better than the great ones of the earth; thou mayest be poor in the world, and yet rich in grace; and *godliness with content is great gain*. In a word, if thou partest with thy temporal life, and findest an eternal, what dost thou lose by thy change? But Heaven and heavenly things are such as cannot be recompensed with any other. Thou hast an immortal soul lose that, and where canst thou have another? There is but one Heaven, miss that, and where can you take up your lodging but in Hell? One Christ that can lead you thither, reject him, and *there remains no more sacrifice for sin*, O that men would think on these things! Go, sinner, to the world, and see what it can afford you in their lieu, may be it will offer to entertain you with its pleasures and delights: O poor reward for the loss of Christ and Heaven! Is this all thou canst get? Doth Satan rob thee of Heaven and happiness, and only give thee this posy to smell on, as thou art going to thy execution? Will these quench Hell-fire, or so much as cool those flames thou art falling into? Who but those that have lost their understanding would take those toys for Christ and Heaven? While Satan is pleasing your fancies with these baubles, his hand is in your treasure, robbing you of that which is only necessary: 'Tis more necessary to be saved than to be, better not to be, than to have a being in Hell.

Secondly, Earthly things are such, as it is a great uncertainty whether with all our labour we can have them or not. The world, though so many thousand years old, hath not learned the merchant such a method of trading, as that he may infallably conclude he shall at last get an estate by his trade; nor the Courtier such rules of comporting himself to the humour of his Prince, as to assure him he shall rise. They are but few that carry away the prize in the world's lottery, the greater number have only their labour for their pains, and a sorrowful remembrance left them of their folly, to be led such a wild-goose chase after that which hath deceived them at last. But now for Heaven and the things of Heaven, their is such a clear and certain rule laid down, that if we will but take the counsel of the Word, we can neither mistake the way, nor in that way miscarry of the end. *As many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and the whole*

Israel of God. There are some indeed who run, and yet obtain not this prize, that seek and find not, knock and find the door shut upon them; but it is, because they do it not in the right manner, or in the right season. Some would have Heaven, but if God save them he must save their sins also, for they do not mean to part with them; and how Heaven can hold God and such company together, judge you. As they come in at one door, Christ and all those holy spirits with him would run out at the other. Ungrateful wretches, that will not come to this glorious feast, unless they may bring that with them which would disturb the joy of that blissful state, and offend all the guests that sit at the table with them; yea, drive God out of his own mansion-house.

A second sort would have Heaven, but like him in *Ruth*, iv. 2, 3, 4. who had a mind to his kinsman *Elimelech's* land, and would have paid for the purchase, but he liked not to have it by marrying *Ruth*, and so missed of it. Some seem very forward to have Heaven and salvation, if their own righteousness could procure it, (all the good they do, and duties they perform, they lay up for this purchase) but at last perish, because they receive not Christ, and Heaven in his right. A third sort are content to have it by Christ, but their desires are so impotent, that they put them upon no vigorous use of means to obtain him, and so (like the sluggard) they starve, because they will not pull their hands out of their bosom to reach their food that is before them; for the world they have metal enough, and trudge far and near for it, and when they have run themselves out of breath, can stand and *pant after the dust of the earth*, as the Prophet phraseth it, *Amos* ii. 7. But for Christ, and interest in him, O, how cold are they! There is a kind of cramp invades all the powers of their souls when they should pray, hear, examine, draw out their affections in hungerings and thirstings after his grace and Spirit. It is strange to see how those who, while in full sail for the world, are suddenly becalmed, not a breath of wind stirring on their souls after these things. And is it any wonder that Christ and Heaven should be denied to them that have no more mind to them? Lastly, Some have zeal enough to have Christ and Heaven, but it is when the Master of the house is risen, and hath shut to the door; and truly then they may stand long  
enough



enough rapping before any come to let them in. There is no Gospel preached in another world ; but as for thee, poor soul, who art persuaded to renounce thy lusts, throw away thy own righteousness, that thou mayest run with more speed to Christ ; and art so possessed with the excellency of Christ, thy own present need of him, and salvation by him, that thou pantest after him more than life itself. In God's name go on and speed, be of good comfort, he calls thee by name to come unto him, that thou may have rest for thy soul.— Those that come to him, he will in no wise cast away, nor suffer any other to pluck them away. *This day* (saith Christ to *Zaccheus*) *salvation is come to thy house*, Luke xix. 9. Salvation comes to thee, poor soul, that openest thy heart to receive Christ, thou hast eternal life already, as sure as if thou wast a glorified Saint now walking in that heavenly city. O, Sirs, if there were a free trade proclaimed to the *Indies*, enough gold for all that went, and a certainty of making a safe voyage, who would stay at home ? But alas, this can never be had. All this, and infinitely more, may be said for Heaven ; and yet how few leave their uncertain hopes of the world to trade for it ? What account can be given for this, but the desperate Atheism of men's hearts ? They are not yet fully persuaded, whether the Scripture speaks true or not, whether they may rely upon the discovery that God makes in his Word of this new-found land, and those mines of spirituals there to be had. God open the eyes of the unbelieving world (as he did the Prophets servants) that they may see these things to be realities, 'tis faith only that gives a being to these things in our hearts. By faith *Moses* saw him that was invisible.

Thirdly, Earthly things when we have them, we are not sure of them ; like-birds, they hop up and down, now on this hedge, and anon upon that, none can call them his own. Rich to-day, and poor to-morrow : in health when we lie down, and arrested with pangs of death before midnight. Joyful parents, one while solacing ourselves with the hopes of our budding posterity, and may be ere long knocks one of *Job's* messengers at our door to tell us they are all dead now in honour, but who knows whether we shall not live to see that buried in scorn and reproach ? The Scripture compares the multitude of people to waters ; the great ones of the

world sit upon these waters, as the ship floats upon the waves, so do their honours upon the breath and favour of the multitude; and how long is he like to sit that is carried upon a wave? One while they are mounted up to Heaven (as *David* speaks of the ship) and then down again they fall into the deep. *We have ten parts in the King* (say the men of *Israel*) *2 Sam.* xix. 43. and in the very next verse, *Sheba* doth but sound a trumpet of sedition, saying, *We have no part in David, no inheritance in the son of Jesse*, and the wind is in another corner. For it is said, *every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba*. Thus was *David* cried up and down, and that almost in the same breath. Unhappy man he, that hath no surer portion than what this world will offer him! The time of mourning for the departure of all earthly enjoyments is at hand; we shall see them as *Eglon's* servants did their Lord, fallen down dead before us, and weep because they are not. What folly then is it to dandle this vain world in our affections, (whose joy, like the child's laughter on the mother's knee, is sure to end in a cry at last) and neglect Heaven and heavenly things which endure for ever? O remember *Dives* stirring up his pillow, and composing himself to rest, how he was called up with the tidings of death before he was warm in his bed of ease, and laid with sorrow on another, which God had made for him in flames, from whence we hear him roaring in the anguish of his conscience. O soul, hadst thou but an interest in heavenly things, these would not thus slip from under thee. Heaven is a kingdom that cannot be shaken, Christ an abiding portion, his graces and comforts sure waters that fail not, but spring up unto eternal life. The quails that were food for the *Israelites* lust soon ceased, but the Rock that was drink to their faith followed them; this Rock is Christ. Make sure of him, and he will make sure of thee; he will follow thee to thy sick-bed, and lie in thy bosom, cheering thy heart with his sweet comforts, when worldly joys lie cold upon thee, (as *David's* clothes on him) and no warmth of comfort to be got from them. When thy outward senses are locked up that thou canst neither see the face of thy dear friends, nor hear the counsel and comfort they would give thee, then he will come (though these doors be shut) and say, Peace be to thee, my dear child, fear not  
Death

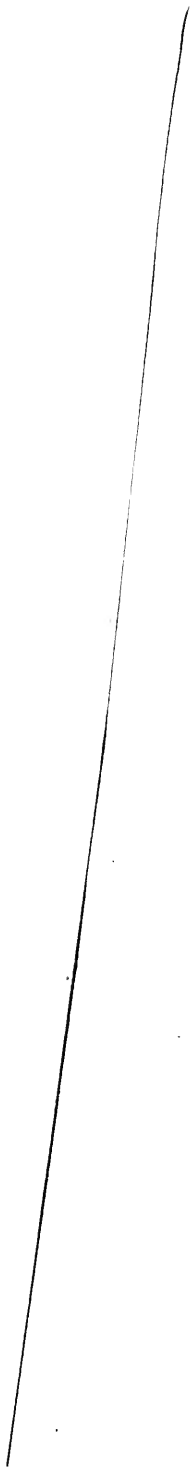
Death or Devils, I stay to receive thy last breath, and have here my Angels waiting, that as soon as thy soul is breathed out of thy body, they may carry and lay it in my bosom of love, where I will nourish thee with those eternal joys that my blood and love have prepared for thee.

Fourthly, Earthly things are empty and unsatisfying. We may have too much, but never enough of them; they oft breed loathing, but never content; and indeed, how should they, being so disproportionate to the vast desires of our immortal spirits? A spirit hath not flesh and bones, neither can it be fed with such; and what hath the world, but a few bones covered over with some fleshly delights, to give it? The less is blessed of the greater, not the greater of the less. These things therefore being so far inferior to the nature of man, he must look higher, if he will be blessed, even to God himself who is the Father of spirits. God intended these things for our use, not enjoyment: and what folly is it to think we can squeeze that from them, which God never put in them? They are beasts, that moderately drawn, yield good milk, sweet refreshing; but wring them too hard, and you will suck nothing but wind or blood from them. We lose what they have, by expecting to find what they have not: none find less sweetness, and more dissatisfaction in these things, than those who strive most to please themselves with them. The cream of the creature floats at the top; and he that is not content to fleet it, but thinks by drinking a deeper draught to find more, goes further to speed worse, being sure by the disappointment he meets, to pierce himself through with many sorrows. But all these fears might be escaped, if thou wouldest turn thy back on the creature, and face about for Heaven. Receive Christ, and through him hopes of Heaven, and thou takest the right road to content, thou shalt see it before thee, and enjoy the prospect of it as thou goest, yea, find that every step thou drawest nearer and nearer to it. Oh what a sweet change wouldest thou find! as a sick man coming out of an impure, unwholesome climate, where he never was well, when he gets into fresh air, or his native soil, so wilt thou find a cheering of thy spirit, and reviving thy soul with unspeakable content and peace. Having once received Christ, first the guilt of all thy sins is gone; this spoiled all thy mirth

mirth before: all your dauncing of a child, when some pin pricks it, will not make it quiet or merry; well, now that pin is taken out which robbed thee of the joy of thy life. Secondly, Thy nature is renewed and sanctified, and when is a man at ease, if not when he is in health? And what is holiness, but the creature restored to his right temper in which God created him? Thirdly, thou becomest a child of God, and that cannot but please thee well, I hope, to be son or daughter to so great a King. Fourthly, Thou hast a right to Heaven's glory, whither thou shalt ere long be conducted to take and hold possession of that thy inheritance for ever. And who can tell what that is? *Nicephorus* tells us of one *Agbarus*, a great man, that hearing so much of Christ's fame, by reason of the miracles he wrought, sent a painter to take his picture; and that the painter when he came, was not able to do it, because of that radiancy of divine splendor which sat on Christ's face. Whether this be true or no, I leave, but be sure there is such a brightness on the face of Christ glorified, and that happiness which in Heaven, Saints shall have with him, as forbids us, that dwell in mortal flesh, to conceive of it aright, much more to express; 'tis best going thither to be informed, and then we shall confess we on earth heard not half of what we there find, yea, and that our present conceptions are no more like to that vision of glory we shall there have, than the sun in the painter's table is to the sun itself in the Heavens. And if all this be so, why then do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not, yea, for that which keeps you from that which can satisfy? Earthly things are like some trash, which do not only not nourish, but take away the appetite from that which would. Heaven and heavenly things are not relished by a soul vitiated with these. Manna, though for deliciousness, called Angel's food, yet but light bread to an Ægyptian palate. But these spiritual things depend not on thy opinion, O man, whoever thou art (as earthly things in a great measure do) that the value of them should rise or fall as the world's exchange doth, and as vain man is pleased to rate them: Think gold dirt, and it is so, for all the royal stamp on it; count the swelling titles of worldly honour (that proud dust so brags in) vanity, and  
they

they are such ; but have base thoughts of Christ, and he is not the worse : slight Heaven as much as you will, it will be Heaven still ; and when thou comest to thy wits with the prodigal as to know which is the best fare, husks or bread ? where is the best living, among hogs in the field, or in thy Father's house ? Then thou wilt know how to judge of these heavenly things : till then go and make the best market thou canst of the world, but look not to find this pearl of price, true satisfaction to thy soul in any of the creature shops ; and were it not better to take it when thou mayest have it, than after thou hast wearied thyself in vain, in following the creature, to come back with shame, and may be miss of it here also, because thou wouldest not have it when it was offered.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



1085

1764

